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RICHARD THE FIRST.

Printed by C. Reworth,
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RICHARD THE FIRST,

A

POEM:

IN

EIGHTEEN BOOKS.

BY

SIR JAMES BLAND BURGES, BART.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

Richard continues his narrative---Defection of Leopold and Burgundy---The Engliſh and their remaining Auxiliaries embark for Jaffa---Richard proceeds thither by land, accompanied by Ten Knights---He falls in with Saladin's Army near Jaffa---Battle of Jaffa---Saladin completely defeated.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK X.

I.

'YE princely guardians of Germania's ſtate,
'A captive King's defence conven'd to hear!
'Ye arbiters of injur'd RICHARD's fate,
'Before whoſe bar I joyfully appear,
'To plead my wrongs, and my deſert to clear,
'Let me your further gen'rous ſuff'rance claim!
'Oh! deign awhile to lend a patient ear,
'Till your free voice ſhall vindicate my fame,
'And build my fair renown on yonder tyrant's ſhame!

II.

'When Auſtria's vengeful Chieftain had retir'd,
'I open'd to my friends his foul deceit,
'And plann'd the meaſures which our ſtate requir'd.
'Each manly heart with indignation beat,
'When thus, our taſk of glory incomplete,
'Fruitleſs our hopes, and blaſted our intent,
'Hell's potent influence forc'd us to retreat.
'With eyes to earth in thoughtful ſadneſs bent,
'My orders to fulfil the ſorrowing warriors went.

III.

'To ward th' attempt which SALADIN might make,
'Jaffa's half-ruin'd fortreſs, ill ſupplied
'With forces or machines of war, to take,
'I felt myſelf firſt call'd on to provide.
'Thither I charg'd the brave DUBOIS to guide
'My vet'ran hoſt embark'd on board the fleet,
'And bad REONIER at Aſcalon preſide,
'There the repairs yet wanting to complete,
'The too preſumptuous views of traitors to defeat.

IV.

'One morn beheld DUBOIS his anchor heave,
'And falſe BURGUNDIA's Duke and AUSTRIA baſe,
'Stamp'd with diſhonour foul, the harbour leave.
'Theſe, heralds of their own avow'd diſgrace,
'To diſtant Tyre their progreſs ſought to trace,
'There with MONTFERRAT, partner in their ſhame,
'With Pagan gold their feelings to ſolace,
'There with joint force to vindicate his aim,
'And, in LUSIGNAN's wrong, his title to proclaim.

V.

'By land to Jaffa I preferr'd to go;
'For, anxious thither preſent aid to bear,
'I deem'd that thus I ſhould outſtrip the foe.
'Ten Chieftains I retain'd, of puiſſance rare,
'The toils and perils of my route to ſhare:
'Ten, ſuch as might with all that legends old
'Of CHARLEMAGNE's fam'd Knights have ſung compare,
'Or thoſe, of whom our Britiſh bards have told,
'Whom ARTHUR at his board ordain'd their ſeats to hold.

VI.

'Ye, who in deeds of hardihood delight,
'For a few moments your attention deign,
'While thus my comrades' titles I recite.
'LEICESTER, MAULEON, HENRY of Almaigne,
'Bold MORTIMER, well-fitted to ſuſtain
'The weight of war, LACY, in arms renown'd,
'NEVILLE, and REGINALD, who ne'er in vain
'Their faulchions rear'd, LESTANG ſtill foremoſt found,
'CHAVEGUY and FURNIVAL with many a trophy crown'd.

VII.

'Theſe, each with his Eſquire, my band compos'd.
'Completely arm'd, each on his vig'rous ſteed,
'Ere yet the ſun his dawning light diſclos'd,
'The neighb'ring heights we gain'd with anxious ſpeed.
'To cheer our way, of many a martial deed
'We converſe held, 'till ruddy morning glow'd,
'When far at ſea we ſaw our fleet proceed,
'Which o'er the gilded waves ſuperbly rode,
'While from each top-maſt's head the crimſon pennants [flow'd.

VIII.

'Two days our courſe unwearied we purſued,
'Till, on the ſecond eve, the lofty fane
'Which grac'd embattled Ramula we view'd.
'Surpriz'd we ſaw around confuſion reign:
'From ev'ry quarter of the crouded plain
'Their flocks and herds affrighted peaſants drove;
'Of babes and women a diſorder'd train
'Ruſh'd on, as if to reach the town they ſtrove,
'Whoſe cries and wild lament the ſtouteſt hearts might [move.

IX.

' But ſoon the cauſe of their alarm we found.
' Along the craggy and extending height,
' Which once-illuſtrious Ephraim's ſummit crown'd,
' Appear'd in proud array the Pagan might.
' Ting'd by the laſt departing gleams of light
' Their helmets glitter'd: down the long deſcent
' Swiftly they march'd; while, on their left and right,
' The wild Bedouins, on their ſteeds low bent,
' Urg'd their deſtructive courſe, on blood and ſpoils intent.

X.

' Still gazing on the ſcene, we reach'd the gate,
' Thro' crouds tumultuous which around us preſs'd,
' Where ſtood ST. WALERIC our approach to wait.
' No time was now afforded us for reſt.
' To aſcertain what might behove us beſt,
' A council I conven'd without delay,
' Where thus my brave companions I addreſs'd.
" Behold the choice which fortune leaves us---ſay,
" Shall we ſubmit, or force thro' yonder hoſt our way?

XI.

" I ſee your gen'rous ſpirits ſcorn to yield:
" Nor leſs reſolv'd, brave chieftains! is my own.
" Oft have we rang'd together o'er the field
" With ſlaughter ſtain'd, with dying Pagans ſtrewn,
" And oft immortal glory have we won.
" Shall danger now our conſtant ſouls appal?
" If great the riſk, let equal worth be ſhewn!
" Think, when our honour and our duty call,
" Should fate our doom pronounce, triumphantly we fall."

XII.

' The warriors, with a joint conſent, declar'd,
' Their fix'd reſolve the great attempt to try,
' And for immediate enterprize prepar'd.
' But theſe, whate'er their zeal or courage high,
' Suffic'd not with a multitude to vie.
' I therefore from the troops within the town
' Reſolv'd my want of numbers to ſupply,
' Boldly with them to purchaſe freſh renown,
' Or by a glorious death my former toils to crown.

XIII.

' St. Waleric caus'd his legion to appear.
' From them two thouſand vet'rans bold I choſe,
' One half experienc'd to direct the ſpear,
' The others arm'd with croſs or yewen bows,
' And well accuſtom'd to our Pagan foes.
' Theſe to advance on foot no cavil made,
' For ſo did harſh neceſſity impoſe;
' And fifty war-tried chieftains they obey'd,
' Who with obſervance ſtrict th' aſſembling hoſt array'd.

XIV.

' The ſtar of morning now pierc'd thro' the gloom;
' The village cock his firſt ſalute had crow'd;
' From haunted church-yards and the recent tomb
' Slow-flitting ghoſts ſkimm'd tow'rds their drear abode:
' The moon from Heav'n's high arch deſcending rode,
' And ſtill her ſtrain ſad Philomel expreſs'd,
' When my Arabian courſer I beſtrode,
' And join'd the gallant band. My anxious breaſt
' Beat high, as thus my force I haſtily addreſs'd.

XV.

" Comrades and friends! in equal riſk involv'd,
" And equally I truſt, whate'er betide,
" To die or grac'd by fame to live reſolv'd!
" Prepare the fate which threatens to abide.
" This day, this hour, our fortunes muſt decide.
" What tho' with vaunting and preſumptuous boaſt
" Your numbers ſmall yon Saracens deride?
" Soon ſhall they know each Engliſhman's a hoſt,
" And that, while one remains, our victory is not loſt!

XVI.

" I urge you not your vengeful foes to meet:
" Already glows each heart with gen'rous fire.
" I deprecate no daſtardly retreat:
" For where from ſlaughter can we now retire?
" Since then our fortunes inſtant act require,
" Let us by pray'r from Heav'n protection claim!
" Let Him whoſe badge we wear our ſouls inſpire!
" Thus trebly arm'd, in His eternal name
" Let us to battle ruſh, and win immortal fame!"

XVII.

' No more I ſaid. In well-compacted ſtate
' And ſilently I led my valiant train
' Down the deſcent, which, winding from the gate,
' Conducted to the far-extending plain.
' Now, 'gan the dawn o'er night aſcendance gain,
' And with it's feeble but unerring light
' Shew'd us the perils which we muſt ſuſtain.
' On ev'ry hand appear'd the Pagan might,
' And ſhouts of war were heard, and yells of wild affright.

XVIII.

‘ Still unappall'd our ſteady courſe we held;
‘ And, tho' the ſwift Bedouins round us flew,
‘ Succeſsfully their efforts we repell'd,
‘ 'Till tow'rds Ereccon's ruin'd walls we drew.
‘ There, in a long and terrible review,
‘ Arrang'd we ſaw the Saracenic line.
‘ Halting, we ceas'd our progreſs to purſue,
‘ And framing inſtantly the bold deſign,
‘ Tow'rds Caſpin's lake I bad my troop their march incline.

XIX.

‘ Before us, far as could extend our ſight,
‘ A level plain to Jaffa's port was ſpread,
‘ Crouded with foes all earneſt for the fight.
‘ CORAZIN there his bold Arabians led,
‘ FACARDIN rang'd th' Egyptian band, and dread
‘ SURCONDAR there his Turcomans array'd:
‘ CAIFAR brought his hoſt in Nubia bred;
‘ ORASMIN there the Perſian flag diſplay'd,
‘ And Syria's warlike ſons ALMANZOR brave obey'd.

XX.

‘ Each ſquadron twice five hundred men contain'd,
‘ All us'd to arms, each mounted on a ſteed
‘ Of race illuſtrious and to battle train'd.
‘ An equal troop we ſaw BEDREDDIN lead,
‘ Of thoſe whom Thabir's ſavage mountains breed,
‘ And who, amid the deſert's parch'd extent,
‘ With bloody impulſe and reſiſtleſs ſpeed,
‘ Like hungry wolves the wand'ring pilgrim ſcent,
‘ And with his ſpoils bedeck their oft-tranſported tent.

XXI.

‘ Soon as the ſtation I had mark’d we reach’d,
‘ From the long cauſeway with thick hedges crown’d
‘ I plac’d my ranks of combatants, which ſtretch’d
‘ To where the lake far ſpreading and profound
‘ Their left protected, and the valley bound.
‘ My men at arms, fixing their ſhields aſkance,
‘ Their right knees firmly planted on the ground,
‘ In double line graſp’d each his ſlanting lance,
‘ And form’d an iron fence to check the foe’s advance.

XXII.

‘ Behind, with bows of either ſort ſupplied
‘ And ſtore of darts, my archers form’d a band:
‘ Full well they knew their ſteady ſhafts to guide,
‘ And, ſo unerring was their practis’d hand,
‘ Nor helm nor cuiraſs could their force withſtand.
‘ I and my comrades, ſtation’d in the rear,
‘ Where well the movements of the foe we ſcann’d,
‘ Each mounted on his ſteed, with reſted ſpear
‘ And vizor clos’d remain’d relief and aid to bear.

XXIII.

‘ Scarcely this new arrangement was complete,
‘ When on our line a charge impetuous made
‘ The Nubian horſemen. Fitly them to greet
‘ Our archers drew their bows, and undiſmay’d
‘ Amid their ranks a ſhow’r of arrows play’d,
‘ With aim ſo certain and ſuch deadly force,
‘ That ſuddenly their onſet fierce they ſtaid,
‘ And left the field o’erſpread with many a corſe,
‘ While loud their cries were heard and imprecations hoarſe.

XXIV.

' When their far-ſcatter'd band FACARDIN view'd,
" Tho' Nubia's ſons," he cried, " the conteſt fly,
" My bold Egyptians ſhall the work conclude:
" Our arms of proof their feather'd ſhafts defy!"
' With that, intent the enterpriſe to try,
' The ſwarthy warriors, like an angry flood,
' Scour'd o'er the plain, and wav'd their ſabres high.
' Our ſteady vet'rans well their charge withſtood,
' And ev'ry quiv'ring ſpear was deeply ſtain'd with blood.

XXV.

' But ſoon an arrow with reſiſtleſs ſtroke
' A paſſage thro' FACARDIN's helmet found:
' His frontal bone it's point well-temper'd broke,
' And 'mid his kindred Chiefs he preſs'd the ground.
' Their leader ſlain, his ſquadron fled around:
' While our ſtout archers wide deſtruction wrought,
' And pierc'd their backs with many a ſhameful wound,
' They, better wiſdom by experience taught,
' Urging their ſteeds the means of preſent ſafety ſought.

XXVI.

' The Turcomanian ſquadron now came on,
' Superbly mounted on their courſers fleet,
' While far their caſques and burniſh'd hauberks ſhone.
' Them the diſpers'd Egyptians chanc'd to meet,
' As o'er the plain they haſten'd to retreat,
' And ruſh'd among their ranks in order pent.
' Ill did the hoſt their rude irruption greet,
' While their tough bows again our archers bent,
' And 'mid th' entangled croud their home-drawn arrows [ſent.

XXVII.

‘ SURCONDAR, their proud Chieftain, mad with rage,
‘ Now here, now there, his foaming ſteed impell'd,
‘ And ſtrove the mingled bands to diſengage.
‘ But terror had their martial ardour quell'd,
‘ And apprehenſion preſent danger ſwell'd.
‘ Soon as the wide confuſion I perceiv'd,
“ No longer,” cried I, “ be our zeal withheld!
“ Ere yet our foes embarraſs'd are reliev'd,
“ Deeds worthy of our fame may doubtleſs be atchiev'd!”

XXVIII.

‘ Fill'd with diſdain, and eager for the fight,
‘ Firſt thro' their phalanx gallant NEVILLE broke.
‘ Than him our cauſe own'd not a worthier Knight.
‘ His ſpear he pois'd, and with tremendous ſtroke
‘ Terror, diſmay, and death around awoke.
‘ Him near approaching fierce ARSAMES view'd,
‘ As ſeeking ſtill freſh conteſts to provoke,
‘ The flying Turcomans he yet purſued;
‘ And thus aloud exclaim'd with ſalutation rude:

XXIX.

“ Well does the Bear, which dignifies thy creſt,
“ The ſavage and remorſeleſs heart beſpeak
“ Which rankles in thy unbelieving breaſt!
“ Thus ſhall my lance it's foul receſſes ſeek!”
‘ He ſaid, and eager his revenge to wreak,
‘ Struck in the centre of his poliſh'd ſhield,
‘ And ſhiver'd on it's boſs his weapon weak.
‘ More ſure was NEVILLE's arm. The Pagan reel'd,
‘ And o'er the crupper borne preſs'd the enſanguin'd field.

XXX.

‘ CASSIM, who from Circaſſia’s barb’rous ſhore
‘ (Where from his Sire the uſe of arms he learn’d)
‘ To SALADIN a reinforcement bore,
‘ ARSAMES’ combat and defeat diſcern’d.
‘ With fury and regret his boſom burn’d:
‘ Couching his lance the Chriſtian Chief he ſought,
‘ Who, marking his intent, his courſer turn’d,
‘ And with ſuch certain aim and vigour wrought,
‘ That thro’ the eye transfix’d to earth his foe he brought.

XXXI.

‘ From his cruſh’d brain NEVILLE his ſpear withdrew,
‘ And haſtily replac’d it in the reſt,
‘ As to attack him ſturdy MOURAD flew.
‘ A potent ſteed of Turkiſh race he preſs’d,
‘ Of unmatch’d fierceneſs, which his hand had dreſs’d,
‘ And taught, when rag’d the fight, his aid to join.
‘ Thus he exclaim’d, as vengeance fir’d his breaſt,
“ Turn, caitiff! turn, thy trophies now are mine!
“ To MAHOMET thy head devoted I conſign!”

XXXII.

“ Thee and thy Prophet, I alike regard,
“ And thus I anſwer!” NEVILLE quickly cried,
‘ And with his aſhen ſpear he ſtruck him hard.
‘ On MOURAD’s buckler caught it glanc’d aſide.
‘ He, while his foe he hardily defied,
‘ With well-accuſtom’d voice his ſteed impell’d:
‘ Who, rearing, on the adverſe horſe applied
‘ His ſavage teeth where high his arch’d neck ſwell’d,
‘ And, as if us’d to blood, his gripe unfated held.

XXXIII.

‘ While valiant NEVILLE, doubly thus aſſail'd,
‘ Quitting his ſpear to draw his faulchion ſtrove,
‘ Stern MOURAD rudely ſmote his cuiraſs mail'd,
‘ And ſoon, ſo vig'rouſly his mace he drove,
‘ Thro' all the foldings of his buckler clove;
‘ While his faſt-bleeding charger, mad with pain,
‘ His rude oppreſſor ſtruggled to remove:
‘ But all his efforts were employ'd in vain,
‘ So well was he his hold inſtructed to retain.

XXXIV.

‘ His weapon MOURAD now inſulting heav'd,
‘ And ſoon his fate bold NEVILLE muſt have found,
‘ Had not brave REGINALD the ſtrife perceiv'd.
‘ He, with a ſhout which made the field reſound,
‘ Struck MOURAD where his neck the cuiraſs bound,
‘ And, urging on his pow'rful charger's ſpeed,
‘ With rapid movement bore him to the ground,
‘ And overthrowing his aſtounded ſteed,
‘ From both his foes at once his ſuff'ring comrade freed.

XXXV.

“ Thanks to high Heav'n!” exclaim'd the victor Knight,
“ Which, when moſt needed, brought me to thine aid!
“ Together will we proſecute the fight.
“ Let the fierce ſteed which late yon Chief obey'd,
“ By thy more worthy guidance now be ſway'd;
“ Brandiſh his mace, and graſp his ample ſhield!”
‘ No heſitation valiant NEVILLE made;
‘ And ſoon the gallant pair ruſh'd o'er the field,
‘ Where their tranſcendent worth my other friends reveal'd.

XXXVI.

‘ Full well did MORTIMER his ſhare perform.
‘ Among the ſquadrons of th’ embattled foe
‘ He ſwept tremendous, like a wintry ſtorm,
‘ Whoſe raging blaſts the foreſt’s pride o’erthrow,
‘ And ſtrike the time-defying caſtles low.
‘ Where’er he turn’d amid th’ affrighted band,
‘ His matchleſs force he made the Pagans know:
‘ They fled amain, unable to withſtand
‘ The deſolating pow’r of his avenging hand.

XXXVII.

‘ As o’er the field ſtern GEMALEDDIN glanc’d
‘ His anxious eye, the Champion he perceiv’d,
‘ And haſtily to ſtem his courſe advanc’d.
‘ A Georgian Prince was he, who had atchiev’d
‘ Deeds of renown, and honours high receiv’d
‘ From Aſia’s Sov’reign. As amid the fight
‘ Bold MORTIMER he view’d, his boſom heav’d:
“ Alla forbid! that thus a ſingle Knight
“ At our expence,” he cried, “ ſhould ſignalize his might!”

XXXVIII.

‘ With that againſt bold MORTIMER he rode.
‘ At the firſt ſhock their ſpears in fragments flew,
‘ And either Chief his creſt unwilling bow’d.
‘ Their weapons, uſeleſs now, away they threw,
‘ And inſtantly their biting faulchions drew,
‘ And hand to hand in dreadful ſtrife engag’d.
‘ At awful diſtance ſtood the trembling crew,
‘ While doubtfully the bloody combat rag’d,
‘ And each opponent ſtruck with fury unaſſuag’d.

XXXIX.

‘ At length, upon his adverſary's helm
‘ Stout GEMALEDDIN ſmote with impulſe rude.
‘ The weighty blow might have ſuffic'd t' o'erwhelm
‘ A warrior leſs with energy endued:
‘ But he, tho' ſtunn'd, it's mighty force withſtood,
‘ While, glancing from his creſt, the weapon fell,
‘ And in his wounded ſhoulder drank his blood.
‘ Now 'gan with joy the Pagan's boſom ſwell,
‘ And now again he ſought his faulchion to impel.

XL.

‘ But vain his hope, his ſavage tranſport brief:
‘ For, as th' encounter eager to decide
‘ He rais'd on high his arm, the Chriſtian Chief,
‘ His utmoſt power collecting, on his ſide,
‘ Guarded no more, a deadly blow applied.
‘ Deep in his bowels ſank the trenchant blade;
‘ A crimſon'd ſtream his poliſh'd armour dyed;
‘ Quick-glancing phantoms o'er his eye-balls play'd,
‘ And, to abide it's doom, fled his indignant ſhade.

XLI.

‘ OMAR and SELIM ſaw their leader's fall,
‘ As they together rang'd the hoſtile field.
‘ From Georgia they at GEMALEDDIN's call
‘ Had haſten'd, both inſtructed well the ſhield,
‘ The ſabre, and the maſſy lance to wield.
‘ Fury, regret and ſhame their ſouls inflam'd:
‘ As if his blood for great revenge appeal'd,
‘ And from their friendſhip retribution claim'd,
‘ With joint attack their ſpears 'gainſt MORTIMER they [aim'd.

XLII.

‘ The wary Chieftain noted their advance.
‘ As SELIM made his charge with fell intent,
‘ He wheel'd aſide, and 'ſcap'd his threat'ning lance,
‘ While, OMAR's menac'd vengeance to prevent,
‘ With his good ſword a weighty blow he lent,
‘ Which, thro' the cuiraſs that his ſhoulders bound
‘ Forcing it's way, his boſom widely rent.
‘ His ſpirit ſought a paſſage thro' the wound,
‘ And far beyond his ſteed he bleeding preſs'd the ground.

XLIII.

“ Thoſe who attempt,” cried MORTIMER, “ to wreak
“ Like thee their rage, like thee ſhould meet their end!
“ Farewell! I go thy comrade baſe to ſeek:
“ His ſhall thy hov'ring ſoul ere long attend,
“ And death again ſhall give to thee thy friend!”
‘ He ſaid, and turn'd the furious Chief to meet:
‘ But LACY, his aſſociate to defend,
‘ And SELIM's murd'rous purpoſe to defeat,
‘ Eager acroſs the field had urg'd his courſer fleet.

XLIV.

‘ Thro' routed bands, which ill his force withſtood,
‘ And hot with toil, the vet'ran warrior came,
‘ Waving on high his faulchion ſtain'd with blood.
‘ As SELIM couch'd his ſpear with vengeful aim,
‘ Ruſhing between, he cried with loud acclaim,
“ Pagan! forbear, thy purpoſe vile forego:
“ If thy falſe heart be ſenſible of ſhame,
“ In equal fight attempt thy worth to ſhew,
“ Nor thus preſume to ſtrike an unreſiſting foe!”

XLV.

' He ſaid, and ſtood his onſet fierce to meet.
' The ſturdy Pagan his defiance heard,
' And thus rejoin'd: "No more thy taunts repeat!
" A wrangler's tongue my ſpirit never ſtirr'd,
" Nor can by threats my purpoſe be deferr'd.
" Hence! or the vengeance of my arm abide!"
' Then, ſummoning his ſtrength, his ſteed he ſpurr'd,
' And full on LACY's ſhield his lance applied,
' But from the poliſh'd orb it flew diverging wide.

XLVI.

' He ſought his foaming courſer's ſpeed to check;
' But, ere he could command the looſen'd rein,
' With ſtrong back-handed blow upon his neck
' Impetuous LACY ſtruck, nor ſtruck in vain.
' His head, far ſever'd, bounded o'er the plain,
' Which deeply of th' empurpled current drank
' That guſh'd in torrents from each ſpouting vein,
' While his ſwift ſteed bore off thro' many a rank
' His lifeleſs trunk, 'till 'mid the Georgian hoſt it ſank.

XLVII.

' While thus my comrades brave maintain'd the fight,
' And ſtill th' unequal ſtrife unaw'd purſued,
' My bold Arabian with tranſcendent might
' Bore me where'er the Pagans cloſeſt ſtood.
' My way was mark'd with Saracenic blood:
' Thrice nerv'd I felt my arm, with throbbing force
' My mounting heart propell'd the vital flood,
' As thro' their bands I held my fatal courſe,
' And ſtrew'd the champaign wide with many a breathleſs
[corſe.

XLVIII.

'ORBAN firſt met my overwhelming ſpear.
'He, as the proud SURCONDAR had decreed,
'Was charg'd the Turcomanian flag to bear:
'But Heav'n had doom'd him by my hand to bleed.
'Bold HASSAN, mounted on a furious ſteed,
'Oppos'd my progreſs: him the hope of prey
'From rude Circaſſia had prevail'd to lead;
'But ſhort and baſeleſs prov'd his viſions gay,
'Thro' his broad cheſt transfix'd on Jaffa's plain he lay.

XLIX.

'Th' indignant MUSTAPHA, as near he rode,
'His brother's raſh attempt and fall perceiv'd.
'Together had they left their ſire's abode,
'And many a daring enterprize atchiev'd,
'And now of life together were bereav'd:
'For, as againſt me furiouſly he ruſh'd,
'And high in air his glitt'ring faulchion heav'd,
'My lance the vizor of his helmet cruſh'd:
'He fell, and from his mouth a flood empurpled guſh'd.

L.

'ALI, a Perſian Prince, my wrath defied.
'He, ere the trump of bloody war was heard,
'Survey'd his vaſt domain, his paſtures wide,
'With many a flock enrich'd and lowing herd:
'A ſumptuous Harem he had lately rear'd,
'To guard the beauties whom his wealth had bought,
'Whoſe fond remembrance preſent danger cheer'd.
'But vain relief theſe recollections brought:
'From me he found the death his arrogance had fought.

LI.

‘ As thus acroſs the field with ſlaughter red
‘ I rode, and ſtill the Pagan carnage ſwell'd,
‘ SURCONDAR mark'd my crown-encircled head,
‘ And 'gainſt me furiouſly his ſteed impell'd.
“ Impatiently,” cried he, “ have I beheld
“ Thy ſingle force our armaments defy.
“ Now ſhall thy proweſs by my arm be quell'd:
“ While here thy limbs a feaſt to birds ſupply,
“ The ſpoils of England's King ſhall grace my triumphs [high!”

LII.

“ The ſpoils of England's King,” I ſtraight rejoin'd,
“ Are not, I ween, for pow'rs like thine reſerv'd!
“ Ere RICHARD yield, he muſt a foeman find,
“ Whoſe vig'rous arm more potently is nerv'd.”
‘ We met. His ſpear upon my buckler ſwerv'd,
‘ While mine into a thouſand fragments flew.
‘ SURCONDAR inſtantly the chance obſerv'd,
‘ And turn'd his ſteed the combat to renew.
‘ I breath'd a pray'r to Heav'n, and forth my faulchion [drew.

LIII.

‘ Couching his ſpear the Turcoman advanc'd:
‘ It ſtruck my ſhield with hides and iron bound,
‘ And from my body far innoxious glanc'd.
‘ With better aim I wav'd my faulchion round.
‘ Cleaving his head, my blade a paſſage found
‘ Thro' his bright mail, and with reſiſtleſs might
‘ Struck his right arm and ſhoulder to the ground.
‘ Bleeding he ſank: to realms of endleſs night
‘ His too-aſpiring ſoul took it's unwilling flight.

LIV.

‘ Soon as to earth the vanquiſh'd Chieftain fell,
‘ Amid his band oppreſs'd by grief and fear
‘ My foaming ſteed I turn'd, when brave BLONDEL,
‘ Who ſtill my progreſs had attended near,
‘ Exclaim'd, “ See yonder, where to fate ſevere
“ The bold MAULEON is compell'd to yield!
“ Him, his good courſer ſlain, the Pagans bear
“ With ſhouts triumphant o'er the bloody field,
“ And ſeize his oft-tried lance, and high diſplay his ſhield!”

LV.

‘ Thus ſaying, quickly from his ſteed he leapt,
‘ And to my hand SURCONDAR's weapon gave.
‘ With vengeful courſe acroſs the plain I ſwept,
‘ And, fill'd with ardent zeal my friend to ſave,
‘ Thro' the cloſe-thronging multitude I drave.
‘ Approaching near, “ Hence, ye ignoble crew!”
‘ I loudly cried, “ forego my comrade brave!”
‘ Appall'd they heard, and fearfully withdrew,
‘ While tow'rds him thus redeem'd impatiently I flew.

LVI.

“ Courage!” I cried, “ ſince thus to ſave my friend
“ My aid the Pow'r eternal has decreed,
“ Let us our courſe with arms aſſociate bend!”
‘ To my requeſt the vet'ran Chief agreed,
‘ And, ſeizing by the rein a wand'ring ſteed
‘ Whoſe rider's bleeding corſe the champaign ſtain'd,
‘ He vaulted on his back. With anxious ſpeed
‘ We ruſh'd, to where bold LEICESTER's Earl remain'd
‘ Girt round by threat'ning foes, and doubtful ſtrife main-
[tain'd.

LVII.

‘ While thus the Pagan's onſet we repell'd,
‘ Aſia's proud Sov'reign, from a neighb'ring height,
‘ Where 'mid his crouded Peers he ſtood, beheld
‘ The unexpected iſſue of the fight.
“ And is it thus ye prove your boaſted might?
“ Is this your proweſs?” furiouſly he cried:
“ Princes! with me your energy unite:
“ Be our's the taſk the conteſt to decide!
“ Let MAHOMET his ſons to fame and victory guide!”

LVIII.

‘ He ſaid. Not ſwifter from a ſulph'rous cloud,
‘ When thro' the troubled and deep-mantled ſky
‘ The voice of thunder breaks abrupt and loud,
‘ O'er Heav'n's wide arch quick-glancing light'nings fly,
‘ Than ruſh'd the Prince the chance of war to try.
‘ As when with rapid wing to earth deſcends
‘ Some lordly eagle from his ſtation high,
‘ Where'er his flight imperiouſly he bends,
‘ Terror his progreſs marks, and death his courſe attends:

LIX.

‘ With no leſs vengeful force or fatal aim
‘ Imperial SALADIN his puiſſance ſhew'd,
‘ His routed bands to vindicate from ſhame.
‘ Fir'd with diſdain bold FURNIVAL he view'd,
‘ As 'mid the hoſt his efforts he renew'd,
‘ And rode triumphantly o'er heaps of dead.
‘ Him he aſſaulted with encounter rude:
‘ Piercing his helm, his lance transfix'd his head,
‘ And, as to earth he fell, the warrior's ſpirit fled.

LX.

'Nor did a fate leſs harſh CHAVEGUY betide.
'He, when he ſaw the Aſian King advance
'Red with his comrade's blood, his force defied,
'And aim'd againſt him his well-temper'd lance:
'But on his ſhield receiv'd it paſs'd aſkance,
'While him the Monarch ſmote upon the breaſt,
'And drove him to the earth in deadly trance.
'Than him no worthier ſon Poictou confeſs'd,
'None when alive more lov'd, in glorious death more [bleſs'd.

LXI.

'High thro' the Pagan hoſt a ſhout aroſe,
'Not leſs aſtounding than the midnight blaſt,
'Which, pregnant with alarm and unknown woes,
'Sweeps o'er the ſea, while, 'midſt it's billows vaſt,
'The trembling mariner, with dread aghaſt,
'Hears the wild ſurf upon the breakers rage,
'And fancies every ling'ring hour the laſt.
'So did the ſound our wond'ring ſouls engage,
'Nor did it leſs of ill and horrors new preſage.

LXII.

'We turn'd, and ſaw our friends expiring lie,
'While tow'rds us SALADIN impetuous came,
'His ſpear enſanguin'd brandiſhing on high.
'My brave companions, fill'd with gen'rous ſhame,
'Felt their bold hearts inſpir'd with glory's flame,
'And 'gainſt th' imperial Chief their courſe prepar'd,
'When thus I cried: "This enterpriſe I claim,
"This to myſelf I arrogate unſhar'd!
"Now ſhall the Chriſtian wrongs and ſuff'rings be repair'd!"

LXIII.

' No more I ſaid, nor for their anſwer ſtay'd;
' But, ruſhing thro' the far-encircling croud,
' I reach'd the ſpot where SALADIN diſplay'd
' His warlike proweſs 'mid his Satraps proud.
' Approaching near him, thus I cried aloud:
" By England's King is Aſia's Prince defied!
" Our congreſs now has fav'ring Heav'n allow'd!
" Here, if thou dar'ſt my onſet to abide,
" Let us with equal arms Judæa's fate decide!"

LXIV.

' Thus ſaying, I awaited his reply.
' In accents loud he quickly thus rejoin'd:
" Thoſe, who the pow'r of Aſia's King defy,
" The terrors of his arm are wont to find!
" Of all the Chiefs in hoſtile league combin'd,
" None than thyſelf I more deſire to meet.
" Thanks to our Prophet, who has thus conſign'd
" To me thy vain preſumption to defeat,
" And by thy fall my hopes of triumph to complete!"

LXV.

' He ſaid. Around him roſe an outcry hoarſe,
' As, with his lance in reſt, acroſs the field
' He drove againſt me with impetuous force.
' Midway I met him. On each ſturdy ſhield,
' As forcibly we ſtruck, our weapons peal'd,
' But from the poliſh'd orbs innoxious flew,
' While with the ſhock our puiſſant chargers reel'd.
' Soon diſengag'd a circling courſe we drew,
' Impell'd with equal rage our combat to renew.

LXVI.

" Now to thy heart!" exclaim'd the furious King;
' And, poiſing his ſtout beam with dire intent,
' Struck at my ſhield and made it's concave ring.
' With more aſſur'd effect my ſpear I bent:
' His ſurcoat richly charg'd with gold it rent,
' The gorgeous mail which deck'd his boſom cruſh'd,
' And bore him to the earth with rude deſcent,
' While from the wound a ſtream empurpled guſh'd.
' Trembling the Pagans ſtood, their clam'rous ſhouts were [huſh'd.

LXVII.

' But, as a branch, which rudely to the ground
' A paſſenger has bent with pow'rful hand,
' Springs from his preſſure with elaſtic bound,
' Again it's verdant honours to expand;
' So ruſh'd tumultuouſly the Pagan band,
' To ſave their proſtrate Monarch from my rage.
' Alone their madd'ning vengeance to withſtand,
' My ſingle arm was doom'd their hoſt t' engage,
' And diſproportion'd war with multitudes to wage.

LXVIII.

' As on ſome mountain bleak a moſs-grown oak,
' When blow the wintry tempeſts unreſtrain'd,
' Firm-rooted bears their devaſtating ſtroke;
' Tho' rent his maſſy limbs, his trunk tho' ſtain'd,
' He keeps the ſtation where ſo long he reign'd,
' And ſcorns, whate'er of ill betide, to yield:
' So, tho' around me darts and javelins rain'd,
' Still I prevail'd my potent ſpear to wield,
' Nor, tho' beſet with foes, forſook th' enſanguin'd field.

LXIX.

‘ Nor ſmall nor trivial was th’ encounter rude
‘ Of adverſe arms I then was doom’d to prove.
‘ When on the earth their royal Sire they view’d,
‘ Furious with rage, and urg’d by filial love,
‘ MIRALIS and MELCALEZ onward drove,
‘ And at my breaſt their ſpears impetuous aim’d.
‘ Nor leſs ſtern SAFADIN to reach me ſtrove:
‘ As his bold heart fraternal zeal inflam’d,
‘ He ſhook his threat’ning lance, and high his wrath pro-
[claim’d.

LXX.

‘ Environ’d thus, to Heav’n’s Eternal LORD,
‘ My only refuge now, I breath’d a pray’r:
“ Oh deign,” I cried, “ thy mercy to afford!
“ Inſpire my ſoul impending fate to dare,
“ And make me worthy of the badge I wear!”
‘ No more I added: for, with rapid courſe,
‘ Againſt me now advanc’d the royal pair.
‘ MELCALEZ firſt with imprecations hoarſe
‘ Came on: my poliſh’d ſhield re-echoed with his force.

LXXI.

‘ Forward he rode: but, with ſucceſſion faſt,
‘ MIRALIS rudely on my breaſt-plate ſmote.
‘ His weapon thro’ my yielding armour paſs’d,
‘ And, grazing ’twixt my ſhoulder and my throat,
‘ Dy’d with a crimſon’d torrent my ſurcoat:
‘ Then, as his ſhaft he inſtantly withdrew,
“ Let this,” he cried, “ my ceaſeleſs hate denote!”
‘ And, fill’d with hope his vengeful pow’r to ſhew,
‘ With murd’rous aim he ſought the conflict to renew.

LXXII.

' Nor long delay'd MELCALEZ to advance,
' While potent SAFADIN ſpurr'd on his ſteed,
' And bent againſt me his enormous lance.
' But Heav'n preſerv'd me in my utmoſt need:
' For brave BLONDEL, who with obſervant heed
' Had watch'd them, now his buckler interpos'd.
' Me from MELCALEZ' dread attack he freed:
' Waving his faulchion with the Prince he clos'd,
' And with intrepid heart his onſet rude oppos'd.

LXXIII.

' Ill did MELCALEZ his aggreſſion brook:
' A foe ſo young his haughty mind diſdain'd,
' And with indignant ire his lance he ſhook.
' But him to fall the pow'rs of Heav'n ordain'd:
' Deep thro' his cuiraſs mail'd, with blood diſtain'd,
' BLONDEL's good ſword with force reſiſtleſs paſs'd.
' From the wide wound life's purple current drain'd:
' On his lov'd Sire his ling'ring eyes he caſt,
' And, calling on his name, the warrior breath'd his laſt.

LXXIV.

' T' avenge his fall MIRALIS fiercely turn'd.
' As ſtretch'd in death his brother he ſurvey'd,
' His grief-ſtruck ſoul with tenfold fury burn'd:
' His ſpear portentous as he high diſplay'd,
' And urg'd his ſteed, " To dear MELCALEZ' ſhade
" Thus I conſign thy ſpirit!" loud he cried.
' Straightway againſt him his aſſault he made,
' And ſtoutly on his ſhield his beam applied.
' The point ill-temper'd broke, and fell in fragments wide.

LXXV.

'Aſide his weapon, uſeleſs now, he threw,
'And, drawing inſtantly his faulchion bright,
'Againſt his foe with rage redoubled flew.
'Their fierce encounter ill can I recite,
'Or tell the terrors of their perilous fight:
'For SAFADIN, with vengeance unaſſuag'd,
'Urg'd 'gainſt my breaſt his lance; with fell deſpight
'And deſp'rate purpoſe either boſom rag'd,
'As if at once for life and fame we combat wag'd.

LXXVI.

'Both ſhields reſounded with our frequent ſtroke:
'Rude was the ſhock, and far upon the ground
'The wreck was ſcatter'd as our lances broke.
'Now high our glitt'ring blades we whirl'd around,
'And many a blow we gave and many a wound:
'Thro' his far-beaming armour to his breaſt
'My biting ſword a ready paſſage found,
'While his tranſcendant force my helm confeſs'd,
'And bore of his aſſault memorials deep impreſs'd.

LXXVII.

'And now, as either mail and corſelet rung,
'And, while our nerves augmenting fury brac'd,
'In dread ſuſpenſe our doubtful conflict hung,
'Their Monarch, ſtill inſenſible, in haſte
'His faithful Satraps on a chariot plac'd,
'And tow'rds Aſſaron, far beyond the plain
'Red with his blood, their anxious travel trac'd;
'There from the leech's art relief to gain,
'And by the ſov'reign pow'r of herbs to ſooth his pain.

LXXVIII.

'Soon as this pious duty was perform'd,
'On my devoted head an iron ſhow'r
'From ev'ry ſide with aim unerring ſtorm'd.
'O'er me remorſeleſs fate now ſeem'd to lour;
'And doubtleſs ſoon, in inauſpicious hour,
'Me, their aſſault unable to withſtand,
'Their force united had prevail'd t' o'erpow'r,
'Had not, when needed moſt, Heav'n's guardian hand
'Deign'd to ſupport my cauſe, and check their vengeful [band.

LXXIX.

'For now BLONDEL his foe to earth had fell'd,
'His helmet ſhatter'd and his cuiraſs pierc'd,
'And boldly to my aid his ſteed impell'd.
'MAULEON too his foes had now diſpers'd,
'And haſtily acroſs their ranks revers'd
'Ruſh'd to ſupport me with encounter dread:
'While a freſh hoſt of warriors onward burſt,
'All mounted on the chargers of the dead,
'Before whoſe onſet fierce the trembling Pagans fled.

LXXX.

'The adverſe Chiefs, MIRALIS to protect,
'And from deſtruction SAFADIN to ſhield,
'(Who now, his ſword ſcarce able to direct,
'Seem'd to my greater force prepar'd to yield,)
'Advanc'd from ev'ry quarter of the field.
'Soon with redoubled fury rag'd the fight:
'Each combatant his utmoſt pow'rs reveal'd,
'And, as undaunted they approv'd their might,
'Death ſhook his ſable wings, and ſhriek'd with ſtern delight.

LXXXI.

'As thus my comrades urg'd their bloody ſtrife,
'My arm the fainting SAFADIN purſued;
'And ſoon had ebb'd his near exhauſted life,
'Had not two puiſſant Chiefs our conteſt view'd:
'ARASPES, whom, from Syria's deſerts rude,
'Among his leaders SALADIN had claſs'd;
'And fierce BEDREDDIN, whoſe huge limbs endued
'With ſtrength enormous, and whoſe ſtature vaſt
'The moſt redoubted ſons of Araby ſurpaſs'd.

LXXXII.

'Soon as, approaching o'er th' encrimſon'd field,
'They ſaw the peril of their gallant friend,
'BEDREDDIN cried, "Be thine his head to ſhield!
"Ward off the blows which on his creſt deſcend,
"While I to bear him hence my ſuccour lend!"
'He ſaid. ARASPES inſtantly complied,
'And, ere ſurpriz'd I could my ſhield extend,
'While with loud voice my proweſs he defied,
'With vig'rous aim he ſtruck my unprotected ſide.

LXXXIII.

'It fail'd to penetrate my cuiraſs ſteel'd,
'But with effect ſo potent came the blow,
'That with the ſhock unwillingly I reel'd.
'I felt my breaſt with indignation glow,
'As, forc'd the vanquiſh'd Chieftain to forego,
'I left the conqueſt which my ſword had earn'd,
'To combat with a leſs illuſtrious foe.
'Rage fill'd my ſoul, my heart with vengeance burn'd
'As to receive his charge impatiently I turn'd.

LXXXIV.

‘ While thus we were engag'd, th' Arabian Chief,
‘ Rejoic'd to find his ſtratagem ſucceed,
‘ Quickly advanc'd to SAFADIN's relief.
‘ Perceiving him from many a wound to bleed,
‘ He firmly graſp'd him, and upon his ſteed
‘ Before himſelf the fainting Prince he plac'd:
‘ Then, urging on his courſer's utmoſt ſpeed,
‘ Who panted with his double load, in haſte
‘ Far from the ſcene of blood his eager courſe he trac'd.

LXXXV.

‘ I ſaw them fly, and, like a wretch forlorn
‘ On Afric's ſultry deſert, from whoſe hand
‘ His laſt refreſhing draught is rudely torn,
‘ While round him ſtretch unmeaſur'd wilds of ſand,
‘ And arid plains by ſtreams unbleſt expand,
‘ I gaz'd awhile, loſt in diſtracting thought.
‘ But ſoon, compell'd ARASPES to withſtand,
‘ I charg'd him, and with fierce reſentment ſought
‘ T' avenge the wrong which his confed'racy had wrought.

LXXXVI.

‘ Again his weapon he againſt me bent:
‘ But fruitleſs prov'd his hope, his effort vain;
‘ His ſhatter'd ſpear betray'd his fell intent.
‘ My faulchion forc'd a paſſage to his brain;
‘ Stagg'ring he dropt his unavailing rein:
‘ Awhile, with progreſs ſwift, his frighten'd ſteed
‘ Bore him unconſcious o'er th' enſanguin'd plain,
‘ 'Till to the earth he fell, by fate decreed
‘ Far from his native home the fowls of Heav'n to feed.

LXXXVII.

'While thus eventfully the battle rag'd,
'A ſudden and aſtounding ſhout was heard.
'The pow'rful ſound our wond'ring ſouls engag'd.
'Nearer it drew, and ſoon in air high rear'd
'The welcome banners of our iſle appear'd.
'I view'd my comrades, who to Jaffa's coaſt
'In hour propitious had their gallies ſteer'd,
'And now led on their enterprizing hoſt,
'To aid us and to ſhare our yet appropriate boaſt.

LXXXVIII.

'Onward they came in terrible array:
'DUBOIS the gallant reinforcement led,
'With HARCOURT, TANCARVILLE, and bold GOURNA
'As from a dream replete with horrors dread,
'Where hideous phantoms, from diſtemper bred,
'Glance in ſucceſſion wild, at morn awakes
'Some agitated ſleeper, from his bed
'Starting he hails the light which round him breaks,
'And from his troubled ſoul the fearful viſion ſhakes:

LXXXIX.

'So cheering was the ray which o'er us burſt,
'When to our aid our brave companions came,
'And valiantly the Pagan bands diſpers'd.
'Each leader fill'd with glory's pureſt flame,
'And urg'd by hope to win his ſhare of fame,
'Seem'd danger's front ambitious to provoke:
'While, deaf alike to honour and to ſhame,
'The trembling foe before their furious ſtroke
'Fled, and their ſcatter'd ranks in wild confuſion broke.

XC.

'While thus, on ev'ry ſide, their routed band
'Our troops elate with victory held in chaſe,
'Leaping to earth, BLONDEL with careful hand
'Haſten'd MIRALIS' helmet to unlace.
'Clos'd were his eyes, and pallid was his face,
'Yet ſtill his pulſe, with interrupted beat,
'And frequent pauſe, purſued it's languid race,
'And, round his flutt'ring heart, ſome vital heat
'Denoted ling'ring life ſtill kept it's wonted ſeat.

XCI.

'As brave BLONDEL his gen'rous zeal diſplay'd,
'Nor from his foe withheld his pitying tears,
'Thus to the Chiefs aſſembled round I ſaid.
"Behold how lovely Charity appears,
"When with kind aid her vanquiſh'd foe ſhe cheers,
"And mis'ry of it's ſharpeſt ſting diſarms!
"Her gentle ſway the bonds of life endears;
"By her, religion blooms with new-born charms,
"And man's obdurate heart with ſoft affection warms.

XCII.

"Say, what return deſerves the warrior brave,
"Whoſe valour and tranſcendent worth avail'd,
"When fate moſt frown'd, his monarch's life to ſave?
"Who, when the ſons of SALADIN aſſail'd,
"Singly to cruſh their tow'ring hopes prevail'd?
"Deſert like his with never-fading bays,
"And honour's choiceſt guerdon, ſhould be hail'd;
"For him ſhould Chivalry her trophies raiſe,
"And dignify the worth which ſoars beyond our praiſe."

XCIII.

' From all the Peers approving murmurs broke,
' When on his blood-ſtain'd ſhoulder I applied
' My ſword, and, as I gently gave the ſtroke,
' Thus to the high-deſerving Champion cried.
" Riſe, Sir BLONDEL! thy grateful country's pride!
" Henceforth aſſume a Chriſtian Knight's proud name!
" Still may approving Heav'n thy footſteps guide,
" May thy example England's youth inflame
" Like thee to win renown and bear the meed of fame."

XCIV.

' I ſaid. With modeſt grace uproſe the youth---
' But ah! forgive, when I behold him there,
' When I recal the gen'rous zeal and truth,
' Which led him, to redeem me from deſpair,
' Again new perils and new toils to dare,
' That thus my grateful feelings I proclaim.
' Oh! may there come a time, when thou may'ſt ſhare,
' Thrice-valued friend! my fortunes and my fame,
' And conſecrate with mine thy highly honour'd name!

XCV.

' Forgive, if, while his matchleſs worth I feel,
' I ſpeak the warm effuſions of my breaſt.
' Thus I reſume.---He ſtruggled to conceal
' The ſtrong emotions which his ſoul oppreſs'd,
' Then, bluſhing, ſaid, " Too much for utt'rance bleſt,
" By the warm tear which fond affection draws
" Be my eternal gratitude confeſs'd!
" Oh! may I live to merit thy applauſe,
" Or, as becomes me, fall in thine and England's cauſe!"

XCVI.

" Truſt to thy King," I cried; " thy worth he knows,
" Thy ſoul to honour and allegiance true.
" But now, brave comrades, while the routed foes
" On ev'ry ſide our eager bands purſue,
" Let us, with rev'rence meet and homage due,
" Return our thanks for Heav'n's protecting care.
" While of his mercies here the ſcene we view,
" Let us to GOD unite in heart-felt pray'r,
" And, as we ſhar'd the riſk, in hymns triumphant ſhare.

XCVII.

" Mark where renown'd Dioſpolis appears!
" There, where JUSTINIAN's decorated fane
" In ſolemn ſtate it's dome majeſtic rears,
" Enſhrin'd the relics of ST. GEORGE remain.
" Before his altar, let us ſeek to gain
" The nobleſt recompence of virtuous toil:
" That Heav'n to bleſs our ſacred cauſe may deign,
" And that the Saint and Patron of our iſle,
" A Soldier erſt himſelf, on England's arms may ſmile!"

END OF BOOK X.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XI.

ARGUMENT.

Richard proceeds with his narrative---He ſtates his return to Acre---the tranſactions there, and his truce with Saladin---He concludes his defence---Is unanimouſly acquitted, and leaves the hall---The Emperor's phrenzy---Apparition of Belial---he ſummons his aſſociate Fiends, and repairs with them to England.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XI.

I.

'WHEN duty's ſacred call we had obey'd,
' And with Hoſannas to the Pow'r Divine
' Our homage due of gratitude had paid,
' Sighing I cried, " Here, near ST. GEORGE's ſhrine,
" Let us to worth deceas'd a place aſſign.
" Here let CHAVEGUY and FURNIVAL repoſe:
" Let their remains by England's Saint recline,
" 'Till, when his awful trump the Angel blows,
" Their martyr'd duſt again the burſting tomb diſcloſe."

II.

' I ſaid. Ere long acroſs the bloody plain
' The bodies of the heroes were convey'd,
' And, in a grave within ST. GEORGE's fane,
' With 'cuſtom'd rites and decent pomp were laid.
' Above their tombs their banners we diſplay'd;
' And, on the altar as their ſwords we plac'd,
' And thus our laſt reſpectful tribute paid,
' Our tears the mem'ry of our comrades grac'd,
' With whom ſo oft the paths of glory we had trac'd.

III.

' To Jaffa now we haſtily advanc'd,
' Whoſe citizens, redeem'd from threaten'd harms,
' Our proweſs with triumphant ſongs enhanc'd.
' Then ſprang my BERENGARIA to my arms:
' Her joy contraſting with her late alarms,
' She held her victor conſort to her breaſt,
' And, beaming with innumerable charms,
' While ſcarce her voice th' emotion ſtrong expreſs'd,
' Bliſs which expreſſion mock'd her melting eyes confeſs'd.

IV.

' Soon as the leech's art our wounds had heal'd,
' And reſt had brac'd our limbs by travel tir'd,
' And nerv'd again each arm the ſword to wield,
' By courteſy and feelings high inſpir'd,
' The preſence of MIRALIS I requir'd.
' His brow o'ercaſt beſpoke his troubled ſoul;
' Nought ſpake he, but, abſtracted and retir'd,
' His grief and ſhame he ſought not to controul,
' And kind BLONDEL had fail'd his anguiſh to conſole.

V.

' As ſtill from loſs of blood he ſeem'd depreſs'd,
' I gently urg'd him to partake my ſeat,
' And thus with temper'd phraſe the Prince addreſs'd:
" 'Tis not exulting in your late defeat,
" That early thus your preſence I intreat.
" No, valiant youth! tho' now by fav'ring fate
" No more as rivals in the field we meet,
" Still I reſpect a captive warrior's ſtate;
" Ne'er ſhall his ſpirit curſe my arrogance or hate.

VI.

" Nay, Royal Sir! avert not thus your face:
" Soon ſhall you learn that Engliſhmen delight
" The virtues of an enemy to grace.
" What tho', when rag'd the terrors of the fight,
" In hoſtile arms array'd you prov'd your might;
" Shall RICHARD leſs your chivalry eſteem?
" Or, 'cauſe a father's ſuff'rings to requite,
" You ſtain'd his armour with a crimſon ſtream,
" Shall he leſs nobly now of your endowments deem?"

VII.

' As thus I ſpoke, a deep ſuffuſion dy'd
' His pallid cheek, and, with a voice which grief
' Half ſtifled held, he mournfully replied:
" If to my ſorrows ought could bring relief,
" 'Twould be thy courteſy, illuſtrious Chief!
" But, ſince whate'er my life endear'd is loſt,
" I truſt thy propoſitions may be brief.
" Can'ſt thou reſtore my Sire, my Throne, my Hoſt?
" Can'ſt thou revive the dead, or calm MELCALEZ' ghoſt?"

VIII.

" My pow'r o'er death extends not," I rejoin'd,
" Nor can my will unlock the ſilent tomb:
" But, to relieve from woe the ſick'ning mind,
" To cheer the horrors of affliction's gloom,
" And bid young hope expand her ſoaring plume,
" I truſt that theſe my influence can obtain.
" Cannot I bid thee liberty reſume?
" Cannot I ſay, Again MIRALIS reign!
" Appeaſe thy Brother's ſhade, and heal thy Father's pain!"

IX.

' The Prince aroſe with a convulſive ſtart,
' And on me as his eyes he wildly bent,
" Forbear, alas!" he cried, " to wring a heart
" Already by contending paſſions rent!
" The mis'ries which remorſeleſs fate has ſent
" Time may perhaps enable me to bear.
" But no—my fortunes never can relent:
" No human aid can mitigate my care;
" Death can alone appeaſe my exquiſite deſpair!"

X.

" Behold this badge," I cried, " the ſacred ſign
" Of Him whoſe faith and tenets I profeſs;
" And mark the dictates of His law divine.
" He bad us aid the poor, the wrong'd redreſs,
" The ſick, the pris'ner, by relief to bleſs,
" To feed the hungry, to ſupport the weak,
" And tow'rds our foes forgiveneſs to expreſs:
" He bad us comfort to the ſuff'rer ſpeak,
" The ſorrowing ſpirit cheer, the captive's fetters break."

XI.

" So ſpake the GOD whom Chriſtian nations ſerve.
" And ſhall we, on Judæa's ſacred ſhore
" Which felt His preſence, from His precepts ſwerve?
" No longer, Prince, captivity deplore!
" Return to freedom and thy Sire once more,
" And with thee brave MELCALEZ' corſe convey!
" Thus to thy hand thy faulchion I reſtore.
" When thou review'ſt thy royal father, ſay
" Thus does a Chriſtian King his GOD's commands obey."

XII.

" If thus," replied the youth, " thy Chriſtian law
" Teaches to comfort and reſpect a foe,
" Still ſhall MIRALIS think of it with awe.
" Releas'd by thee to SALADIN I go:
" His gen'rous heart with gratitude will glow;
" No more for paſt misfortune will he grieve,
" But conſolation from thy bounty know.
" From thy example may I worth atchieve,
" And learn what luſtre arms from clemency receive."

XIII.

' As thus he ſpoke, drawn forth in martial ſtate,
' By GOURNAY led, appear'd a gallant train,
' On Aſia's heir with due reſpect to wait.
' With brave MELCALEZ' bier o'er Jaffa's plain
' They march'd, the tow'rs of Thamnathſare to gain,
' Where, with the remnant of his vanquiſh'd crew,
' The Monarch nurs'd his heart-conſuming pain.
' Meantime, embark'd our progreſs to renew,
' O'er the green waves, impell'd by fav'ring blaſts, we flew.

XIV.

' Ere long the view of Acre's tow'rs we caught,
' And ſoon, within her well-known port, our fleet
' The pilot's ſkilful hand to anchor brought.
' But there, intent our purpoſe to defeat,
' Fiends ſpread their treaſons our approach to greet:
' Baſe LEOPOLD, and OTHO loſt to ſhame,
' Urg'd on the croud with virulence and heat,
' To aid MONTFERRAT's enterpriſing aim,
' And him as rightful King of Judah to proclaim.

XV.

‘ Ripe was the project which their guilt contriv’d,
‘ And boldly was their purpoſe foul profeſs’d,
‘ When at LUSIGNAN’s palace I arriv’d.
‘ Scarce were my toils repair’d by needful reſt,
‘ When to the hall the factious Chieftains preſs’d.
‘ Them cloſely follow’d a tumultuous band,
‘ Whom oft with ſpecious reas’nings they addreſs’d,
‘ And, as a charioteer with ſkilful hand
‘ Governs his ſteeds, prevail’d their ardour to command.

XVI.

“ Wherefore,” exclaim’d I, “ thus, with rude approach,
“ Does this licentious multitude preſume
“ Unbidden on my privacy t’ incroach?”
“ Their Rights, replied MONTFERRAT, “ to reſume,
“ And to ſupport my claim, the People come!
“ When they their high and ſov’reign will declare,
“ Who is there ſo impatient for his doom,
“ Who of his ſafety ſhall ſo little care,
“ As their united force and menac’d wrath to dare?”

XVII.

“ Who ſhall oppoſe them?” ſtraightway I rejoin’d,
“ From me, from England’s King, that favour’d iſle
“ Where freedom blooms, reſiſtance ſhall they find.
“ Hence with this turbulent and madd’ning coil,
“ Which, foully aiming Europe’s Chiefs t’ embroil,
“ To infamy and ſure deſtruction drives!
“ Hence, ye inſidious Demagogues! whoſe guile
“ Support to faction and rebellion gives,
“ And of it’s beſt defence our ſacred cauſe deprives!”

XVIII.

‘ As thus I ſpoke with indignation fir'd,
‘ The croud abaſh'd my dictate ſtern obey'd,
‘ And, as if conſcious of their fault, retir'd.
‘ But CONRAD and his trait'rous band, afraid
‘ Their fury ſhould by reaſon be allay'd,
‘ To bold invectives furiouſly gave vent,
‘ And to arouſe their ſlumb'ring rage eſſay'd.
‘ So well fulfill'd they their accurs'd intent,
‘ That threat'ning ſhouts once more the vaulted chamber [rent.

XIX.

‘ And now the clamour more intemp'rate grew:
‘ Like pent-up waters burſting thro' their mound,
‘ And urg'd by ſtorms, ruſh'd on the ſervile crew.
‘ Vain were my efforts; by the deaf'ning ſound
‘ Of CONRAD and his Rights my voice was drown'd:
‘ And deſp'rate deeds their fury might have wrought,
‘ Since paſſion now their ſouls to madneſs wound,
‘ Had not LUSIGNAN their attention caught,
‘ As with his hand outſtretch'd an audience he beſought.

XX.

‘ Mov'd by the tears which down his viſage ran,
‘ The noiſy croud their turbulence reſtrain'd,
‘ When thus the venerable King began.
“ Too long o'er Judah has LUSIGNAN reign'd,
“ Since now his people, by corruption gain'd,
“ Forget their duty and renounce his cauſe.
“ The crown, which muſt by conteſt be maintain'd,
“ Suits not the care-worn brow of him, who draws
“ His only hope from Heav'n, and Heav'n's conſoling laws.

XXI.

" Alas! too much of royalty I've known.
" Conſuming anguiſh, ever-during care,
" Regret and ſorrow have beſet my throne,
" And all my proſpects pointed to deſpair.
" There needs no force, the diadem to tear
" From him, who never felt it's boaſted joys:
" Let thoſe, who ſeek the dazzling prize, beware
" Of the ſharp ſting, which 'mid it's wreaths annoys
" Their falſely-pictur'd bliſs, and happineſs deſtroys.

XXII.

" The glare of pomp no longer can amuſe
" The mind in which ambitious hopes are dead:
" It's ſplendid ſhadows their attraction loſe.
" Fancy her unſubſtantial veil may ſpread,
" Wave her gay wings, her balm Lethæan ſhed,
" And court with ſmiles the victim of her art:
" Arm'd with conviction from experience bred,
" I drive the faithleſs Syren from my heart,
" And ſeek the peace which Heav'n in mercy may impart.

XXIII.

" Let my poor realm no civil feuds deplore:
" Ceaſe, England's King! 'gainſt deſtiny to ſtrive,
" And tempt me with ideal pow'r no more.
" Henceforth to GOD and to my ſoul I live,
" From ſelf-approving conſcience to derive
" That conſolation which the world denies.
" May He my errors and my crimes forgive,
" May He compaſſionate Judæa's ſighs,
" And may, to end her woes, ſome great avenger riſe!"

XXIV.

‘ Thus ſpoke th' impaſſion'd King; and, with a look
‘ Which mingled ſcorn and majeſty confeſs'd,
‘ The golden circlet from his brow he took,
‘ And to the people who around him preſs'd
‘ With dignified appeal himſelf addreſs'd.
“ To you this Crown I ſolemnly reſign.
“ May he, whoſe front it's orbit ſhall inveſt,
“ Meet with protection from the Pow'r Divine,
“ And may his rule be found more fortunate than mine!”

XXV.

‘ Scarce had he ended, when throughout the croud,
‘ Mov'd by compunction, tenderneſs and ſhame,
‘ A tumult 'gan to ſpread: with murmurs loud
‘ Each on his neighbour ſought to throw the blame,
‘ And 'gainſt their factious leaders to exclaim,
‘ Whoſe guilt and high preſumption they had ſhar'd.
‘ Soon ev'ry boſom caught the gen'rous flame;
‘ And now, immediate vengeance they declar'd
‘ 'Gainſt thoſe who to traduce their injur'd King had dar'd.

XXVI.

‘ The trait'rous Chieftains, fill'd with wild alarm,
‘ Eſſay'd their riſing fury to prevent,
‘ And ſought by pray'rs t' eſcape impending harm:
‘ But ſtill freſh ſhouts the hall of audience rent,
‘ The croud 'gainſt Conrad ruſh'd with one conſent,
‘ When good Lusignan, with benignant care,
‘ Implor'd them to reſtrain their rude intent,
‘ And urg'd me my concurrence to declare
‘ With his reſolve no more Judæa's crown to wear.

XXVII.

‘ While reign'd the tumult, as immers'd in thought
‘ I ſtudied how the conteſt I might cloſe,
‘ Heav'n to my aid it's inſpiration brought.
“ Appeaſe this ſenſeleſs ſtrife,” I cried, “ which flows
“ From zeal miſguided, big with future woes.
“ Since thus LUSIGNAN wills, no more my voice
“ His purpos'd reſignation ſhall oppoſe:
“ Take in his room the minion of your choice!
“ Let CONRAD and his crew in ſplendid guilt rejoice!

XXVIII.

“ Be their's the inſults of the Pagan hoſt,
“ Emboldened by their treaſons, to correct;
“ Be their's the charge, your deſolated coaſt
“ From ravage and deſtruction to protect:
“ But let LUSIGNAN, whom ye thus reject,
“ To climes more worthy of his virtues ſteer,
“ Where nought with Judah ſhall his thoughts connect,
“ Save, when of her misfortunes he ſhall hear,
“ Compaſſion from his eye may force a pitying tear.

XXIX.

“ His high endowments, which ye blindly ſcorn,
“ His merits, which ſo foully ye betray,
“ Th' imperial throne of Cyprus ſhall adorn.
“ There may he long maintain his righteous ſway,
“ And to remote poſterity convey
“ Unſullied honour and a peaceful crown!
“ May future joys his paſt-gone woes repay!
“ May him ſucceſſive heroes proudly own
“ The founder of their ſtate, and ſource of their renown!”

XXX.

' I ſaid. LUSIGNAN caught my outſtretch'd hand,
' And, as the dictates of his ſoul he ſpoke,
' From factious OTHO and his trait'rous band
' Exulting ſhouts of clam'rous tranſport broke.
" Let him," they cried, "his reſignation cloak
" With ſuch pretences as may gild his ſhame;
" While we propitious influences invoke,
" To guide our Monarch in the paths of fame,
" And ſanctify his juſt and now eſtabliſh'd claim!"

XXXI.

' Advancing forward, on MONTFERRAT's head
' Burgundia's Duke the golden circlet plac'd,
' And o'er his back the royal mantle ſpread:
' Then, ſummoning the gazing croud, in haſte
' To the chief fane their boiſt'rous courſe they trac'd,
' There to complete their bold and impious deed,
' And conſecrate a pow'r by crimes debas'd.
' But otherwiſe inſulted Heav'n decreed,
' And 'midſt it's triumph doom'd ſucceſsful guilt to bleed.

XXXII.

' Oh blind to deſtiny, and ſlave to hope!
' Still will preſumptuous man controul diſdain,
' Still will he give unbridled paſſion ſcope,
' And, fondly graſping at diſtinctions vain,
' Attempt by crimes a fleeting ſway to gain?
' Thus CONRAD, with pre-eminence elate,
' Led to the temple his tumultuous train,
' And ey'd with joy his unaccuſtom'd ſtate,
' Unconſcious of the ills prepar'd by vengeful fate.

XXXIII.

'He reach'd the fane, and the far-dazzling throne
'Bedeck'd with gold and brilliant gems he view'd,
'When two ſtrange youths, who ſilent and unknown
'Mix'd with the croud within the portal ſtood,
'Ruſh'd forward, and with ſalutation rude
'Their murd'rous poniards buried in his ſide.
'Stagg'ring he fell, and with his guſhing blood
'He breath'd his ſoul, the judgment to abide
'Of Him, whoſe high beheſt his arrogance defied.

XXXIV.

'With ſhouts of frantic rage the city rung.
'Eager to know whence roſe the tumult new,
'With ſudden impulſe from my couch I ſprung,
'And with LUSIGNAN, and the choſen few
'Who ſhar'd our councils, tow'rds the temple flew.
'We met the multitude who CONRAD bore:
'Death o'er his cheeks had ſpread his pallid hue,
'His manly boſom was diſtain'd with gore,
'And ſtill of paſſions ſtrong his brow the veſtige wore.

XXXV.

'While yet, impreſs'd with pity, I ſurvey'd
'All that remain'd of him, whoſe ſpirit proud
'It's mad ambition lately had diſplay'd,
'With eager haſte and exclamations loud
'Tow'rds the ſad ſpot approach'd the buſy croud.
'The two Aſſaſſins manacled they brought.
'With more than human confidence endow'd,
'They gaz'd, as if they peril heeded nought,
'And ſmil'd, as if a deed of glory they had wrought.

XXXVI.

' I bade them ſay, with what accurs'd intent,
' Which neither fear nor danger could reſtrain,
' They thus to Acre had their travel bent,
' And, by what Dæmon urg'd, they dar'd prophane
' With royal blood the conſecrated fane.
' As if prepar'd our judgment to abide,
' Erect they ſtood, and, as with fierce diſdain
' And mingled joy MONTFERRAT's corſe they ey'd,
' With dignified addreſs the elder youth replied:

XXXVII.

" Brethren we are, and ſubjects of the Prince,
" Whom men the Antient of the Mountain call.
" Their firm attachment earneſt to evince,
" No pains, no death, his vaſſals can appal:
" They ſcorn whate'er of peril may befal;
" At his command the craggy rock they climb,
" And confident in duty headlong fall;
" Thro' Aſia's bounds, and Europe's diſtant clime,
" His word their zeal impels with energy ſublime.

XXXVIII.

" By him commiſſion'd, hither we repair'd
" To wreak his vengeance on MONTFERRAT's head,
" Who on his brother wreck'd at Tyre had dar'd
" To perpetrate a foul and trait'rous deed.
" Our daggers made the faithleſs tyrant bleed.
" Lead us to death! unlock the welcome gate
" Of promis'd tranſports, where our ſpirits, freed
" From mortal 'cumbrance and beyond your hate,
" Shall triumph in the joys which loyalty await."

XXXIX.

'They led the bold Enthuſiaſts to their doom,
'And, while regret in ev'ry breaſt awoke,
'We bad for CONRAD ſtraight prepare the tomb.
'Meantime I thus th' aſſembled Chiefs beſpoke:
"Since thus the ſavage and miſguided ſtroke
'Of vengeful fury has MONTFERRAT ſlain,
"Without delay the aid of Heav'n invoke,
"To guide your choice tow'rds one, whoſe worthy reign
"May heal inteſtine feuds, and Judah's cauſe maintain."

XL.

'Forthwith the Chiefs commenc'd their grave debate;
'When Auſtria's Duke, whoſe deeply rankling breaſt
'Teem'd with revenge and diſappointed hate,
'Eager their ſolemn council to moleſt,
'With crafty Burgundy the croud addreſs'd,
'And ſought again t' entice them to their lure:
'As if with democratic zeal impreſs'd,
'Their Sov'reign Rights they urg'd them to inſure,
'And 'gainſt the Princes rail'd with obloquy impure.

XLI.

'But fruitleſs now their artifices prov'd,
'Nor to their views would now the people bend.
'By brave MONTFERRAT's recent murder mov'd,
'They felt their hearts to ſlighted Heav'n aſcend,
'And fear'd by freſh preſumption to offend:
'No clamours rude aroſe; but, ſtruck with awe,
'They ſeem'd freſh chaſtiſements to apprehend.
'The ſudden change their guilty leaders ſaw,
'And ſought the means themſelves from peril to withdraw.

XLII.

‘ Otho took refuge with his Gallic band,
‘ While Leopold, determin'd to retreat
‘ From wrong'd Judæa, haſten'd to the ſtrand,
‘ And with his hoſt embark'd on board his fleet,
‘ In other climes preparing to complete
‘ The foul revenge which rankled in his heart.
‘ As quiver'd in the breeze his flowing ſheet,
‘ The people, lately victims of his art,
‘ Contemptuouſly beheld the recreant Prince depart.

XLIII.

‘ Tranquillity thus viſiting again
‘ Thoſe walls from which ſo lately ſhe had flown,
‘ The Chiefs proclaim'd that Henry of Champaigne,
‘ Whoſe proweſs oft in perils had been ſhewn,
‘ And whoſe ſuperior qualities were known
‘ To all who war's alarms with him had ſhar'd,
‘ Should fill Lusignan's agitated throne.
‘ Rejoicing numbers him their King declar'd,
‘ And with becoming pomp to Acre's fane repair'd.

XLIV.

‘ Now thro' the camp I publiſh'd my intent,
‘ To ſeek fair England's lov'd domains once more:
‘ Our barks were fitted, and our ſails were bent,
‘ And all prepar'd to quit Judæa's ſhore,
‘ When lo! from Saladin Orasmin bore
‘ Proffers of friendſhip and fair terms of peace.
“ Let us,” ſaid he, “to Paleſtine reſtore
“ Her long-loſt quiet: let our conteſts ceaſe;
“ Let us our wearied hoſts from further toil releaſe.

XLV.

" Thus ſpeaks the King, whom Aſia's realms obey.
" Far as from Sorec's ſtream to Acre's plain,
" Let all the coaſt confeſs the Chriſtian ſway;
" Let Aſcalon to neither pow'r remain;
" Let either people amity maintain,
" And either confine be ſecurely paſs'd:
" If Engliſh RICHARD and his Princely train
" Accept theſe proffers, let our compact laſt,
" Till thrice the glorious ſun complete his circuit vaſt."

XLVI.

' The Chieftain ſaid, and thus I ſtraight rejoin'd.
" Thy Sov'reign's offers fair and candid ſeem;
" And, from my friends ſhould they acceptance find,
" Our full conſent expedient I eſteem.
" After long ſtruggles Judah to redeem,
" Th' auſpicious moment joyfully we hail,
" When peace, Heav'n's choiceſt boon, again ſhall beam,
" When war no longer ſhall her coaſts aſſail,
" And her loſt ſons no more humanity ſhall wail.

XLVII.

" But ſay, illuſtrious Perſian Chief! whence ſpring
" Theſe unexpected proffers, whence ariſe
" Theſe peaceful overtures of Aſia's King?"
" My Prince," replied he, " bad me not diſguiſe
" The cauſe, why thus in amicable ties
" He ſeeks with your's his intereſts to unite;
" And why he thus relinquiſhes the prize,
" So often and ſo well maintain'd in fight,
" While yet immenſe his force and unimpair'd his might.

XLVIII.

" To you, who often in the hoſtile field
" His brave and countleſs armaments have view'd,
" His vaſt reſources amply are reveal'd.
" No wiſh your menac'd vengeance to elude,
" No apprehenſion from the war purſued,
" Lead him to modify ambition's plan,
" And thus to terminate the bloody feud.
" 'Twas thou who taught'ſt him Chriſtian worth to ſcan,
" And 'mid the ſhock of war to feel himſelf a Man.

XLIX.

" From early youth inur'd to feats of arms,
" Not all thy fame at Cæſarea gain'd,
" Nor Acre's fall, inſpir'd him with alarms.
" At Jaffa boldly he the ſtrife maintain'd,
" Where well thy practic'd valour he ſuſtain'd
" And dy'd with gore the long-conteſted ſtrand.
" Nor had he now to make this proffer deign'd,
" Had not thy virtues, and thy ſelf-command,
" Mov'd him to own thy worth and court thy friendly [hand.

L.

" When, by domeſtic anguiſh moſt diſtreſs'd,
" Thou nobly ſent'ſt him young MELCALEZ' bier,
" As once again his darling ſon he preſs'd,
" And on his boſom dropt a father's tear,
" He learnt thy gen'rous feelings to revere.
" But, when thy praiſe he heard MIRALIS ſpeak,
" And grateful tribute to the doctrines bear,
" Which taught thee to befriend the poor and weak,
" His heart impell'd him thus thy amity to ſeek.

LI.

" Since, then, th' Eternal Pow'r has ſtamp'd each mind,
" Pure and congenial, in one common mould,
" Henceforward may your virtues be combin'd!
" Oh! let your ſpirits, free and uncontroul'd,
" Their kindred gallantry and worth unfold:
" Let both obey approving Heav'n's beheſt!
" Angels and men with tranſport ſhall behold
" Your hands the ravages of war arreſt,
" And peace again ſhall ſmile, and Judah ſhall be bleſs'd!"

LII.

' As thus ORASMIN ſpoke, th' applauding croud,
' Mov'd by the frank avowal of the Chief,
' Burſt forth in ſhouts and acclamations loud,
' While we, rejoicing in the prompt relief
' Of ſuff'ring Judah's long-protracted grief,
' Prepar'd the ſolemn bus'neſs to tranſact.
' With mutual confidence, and tranſcripts brief,
' On either ſide we fram'd the high compact,
' And call'd on conſcious Heav'n to ratify the act.

LIII.

' Thus did my arm the glorious work complete,
' Appointed for me by propitious fate.
' I found the Chriſtians harraſs'd by defeat,
' By famine ſpent, and urg'd by Pagan hate:
' I left them proſp'rous, dignified, and great.
' Before I came, their vanquiſh'd Monarch held
' A barren ſceptre, and an empty ſtate:
' Th' invaders ſtern I fought, their pow'r I quell'd,
' And Aſia's force, tho' led by SALADIN, repell'd.

LIV.

'When PHILIP, traitor to the ſacred cauſe,
'From Paleſtine retir'd, I perſever'd:
'When CONRAD, trampling on Religion's laws,
'Rebellion's black and fatal ſtandard rear'd,
'The champion of allegiance I appear'd:
'While Auſtria, and Burgundia's faithleſs Duke,
'Bought by the foe, from honour's dictates veer'd,
'The throne of SALADIN I roughly ſhook,
'And from the puiſſant King full retribution took.

LV.

'When, for two tedious years, proud Acre's tow'rs
'Againſt aſſociate Europe's force had ſtood,
'When PHILIP vainly had led on his pow'rs,
'And, all unequal to the conflict rude,
'Sank in the midſt of Gallia's nobleſt blood,
'The ſtern barbarians fearleſsly I brav'd.
''Twas mine the glorious conteſt to conclude:
'The ſhatter'd remnant of his hoſt I ſav'd,
'And high o'er Acre's walls my conq'ring banners wav'd.

LVI.

'Let Jaffa's plain, and Cæſarea's ſtrand,
'The toils which RICHARD there encounter'd ſpeak,
'When, ſpent his forces, and reduc'd his band,
'He dar'd the Saracenic force to ſeek;
'When their firm legions he prevail'd to break,
'To cruſh their chiefs, their armies to o'erwhelm,
'And on their Monarch his revenge to wreak:
'When fame and victory grac'd his bloody helm,
'And Engliſh valour ſav'd Judæa's tott'ring realm.'

LVII.

'And was it, therefore, from a Chriſtian King
'That he thus ſharply ſhould be doom'd to feel
'Whate'er of woe from jealous hate can ſpring?
'Was it for this that PHILIP dar'd to ſeal
'With JOHN his league perfidious, and to ſteal
'Like midnight thief on fair Normannia's coaſt?
'Say, was it therefore, that with foul appeal
'His delegates led on their trait'rous hoſt,
'Inſulting Albion's ſhores with loud and impious boaſt?

LVIII.

'Let AUSTRIA ſay, if therefore, when impell'd
'By ocean's rage on his unhallow'd ſhore,
'His dungeons deep a captive Monarch held:
'If all that deadly rancour had in ſtore
'On him defenceleſs he preſum'd to pour?
'Or if, unable longer to withhold
'From HENRY's gripe his prey, for paltry ore,
'For promis'd heaps of faſcinating gold,
'He therefore England's King to yonder Tyrant ſold?

LIX.

'Let him, my falſe accuſer, now confeſs,
'If ought but baſe and ſordid hope of gain
'Mov'd him thus long to keep me in dureſs,
'Within thoſe walls where grief and terror reign,
'Whoſe mould'ring tow'rs unnumber'd murders ſtain,
'And where the victims of his ruthleſs ſway,
'Unknown, unpitied, and unwept remain,
'Waſting their ſlow and dreary hours away,
'Amid ſurrounding ſcenes of horror and diſmay?

LX.

'Him to the proof before ye all I dare,
'Howe'er with av'rice or reſentment fraught,
'Howe'er in Auſtria's gains intent to ſhare,
'Or prompt to crown the ills his malice wrought!
'Thoſe heroes, who beneath my banner fought,
'Who, when for glory and for life we ſtrove,
'Mid Pagan bands unfading laurels ſought,
'Will beſt the falſehood of his charges prove,
'And from my injur'd fame his calumnies remove.

LXI.

'To you, brave Chiefs! who now in ſolemn ſtate
'Aſſembled ſit, I make my firm appeal.
'Redeem me from yon proud oppreſſor's hate!
'Tis your's the Tyrant's baſeneſs to reveal,
'Your's is the pow'r a Monarch's woes to heal,
'Again to place him on his rightful throne.
'Your gen'rous ſpirits will his ſuff'rings feel!
'Let your impartial juſtice now be ſhewn;
'Defend my honour, Peers! as ye revere your own.'

LXII.

The warlike King thus ended his defence.
Throughout the crouded hall no ſound aroſe,
But all ſeem'd wrapt in ſilence and ſuſpenſe.
As when, no longer pent in caverns cloſe,
Ungovern'd winds a river's courſe oppoſe,
Their furious blaſts its fetter'd waves reſtrain,
And lock it's current in a brief repoſe;
Soon as ſubſides their potent force, again
The ſtream releas'd burſts forth and ruſhes to the main:

LXIII.

So ſtood the Peers in mute attention bound,
Enchanted by the magic of his tongue,
And ev'ry ſenſe to agony was wound.
But ſoon the vaulted roof with plaudits rung,
When England's Peers tow'rds their lov'd Monarch ſprung,
When him the Champion of their Iſle they hail'd,
And on his neck in heart-felt rapture hung:
Then tranſport and unbridled joy prevail'd,
And ſhouts of wild delight the Tyrant's ear aſſail'd.

LXIV.

Soon as the firſt glad tumult was ſuppreſs'd,
With hand outſtretch'd, the Prelate of Cologne
The dignified aſſembly thus addreſs'd.
" Princes! if well your ſentiments I've known,
" Your loyal hearts the force of truth will own:
" RICHARD, redeem'd from all imputed blame,
" Your ſuffrage ſhall reſtore to Albion's throne,
" And him, with voice unanimous, proclaim
" Pre-eminent alike in valour, worth and fame."

LXV.

Not otherwiſe, than when, thro' Heav'n's expanſe,
From the dark boſom of a nitrous cloud,
With coruſcations bright quick light'nings glance,
Follow reſponſive thunders deep and loud;
So from the pitying and applauding croud
Roſe pealing confirmations of his vote.
On his empurpled throne the Tyrant proud
Trembled: him now accuſing conſcience ſmote,
And mingled ills at hand with terrors more remote.

LXVI.

" Was it for this," he cried, " inſidious Fiend!
" Thy double oracles my hopes inflam'd?
" Was this the tempting prize, the glorious end,
" At which, by thee miſled, I vainly aim'd?
" Where are the terrors which thy guile had fram'd
" To cruſh my rival and confirm his doom?
" Behold! his full acquittal is proclaim'd:
" He lives his priſtine ſtation to reſume,
" By my defeat more freſh his honour now will bloom.

LXVII.

" If thus your promis'd triumphs are fulfill'd,
" If thus with diſappointment ye repay
" The machinations by yourſelves inſtill'd,
" The laws of Heav'n 'twere wiſer to obey,
" And like the herd to own it's juſter ſway.
" Hence, loath'd deceiver! leave me to repel
" The dangers which invade me while I may!
" Thus I renounce thy pow'r, abjure thy ſpell,
" And bid thee elſewhere ſeek a proſelyte for Hell!"

LXVIII.

Straightway, deſcending from th' imperial ſeat,
With ſimulated ecſtaſy he ruſh'd,
The deſtin'd victim of his fraud to greet.
Drops of regret from either eyelid guſh'd,
And, ſpite of art, unconſciouſly he bluſh'd,
As England's King in his embrace he preſs'd.
With wonder ſtruck, the gazing Peers were huſh'd,
When RICHARD, with a look which ſcorn expreſs'd,
Repell'd his proffer'd grace, and thus the Prince addreſs'd.

LXIX.

" HENRY! forbear, not, with pretences weak
" Of ſudden feelings and ingenuous ſhame,
" An injur'd King's regard attempt to ſeek.
" Do'ſt thou eſteem me ſo effete and tame,
" As to conceive thy artifice can claim
" A pow'r to cloak thy aggravated wrong?
" To me his love and hatred are the ſame,
" Who perſecutes the helpleſs, courts the ſtrong,
" And mocks the rights which to humanity belong.

LXX.

" What was thy conduct, when thy fortune ſmil'd,
" And fate conſign'd me to thy dreary tow'r?
" No kindred pity then my pains beguil'd;
" Then her worſt ills calamity might ſhow'r,
" Then want might pang, and ſorrow might devour;
" Thou ſhed'ſt no tears, no wiſh thy ſoul impell'd
" To mitigate the horrors of thy pow'r:
" My worſt endurance calmly was beheld,
" And RICHARD'S ſuff'rings then his Tyrant's triumphs [ſwell'd.

LXXI.

" Now, when Germania's potent Chiefs once more
" Call me to freedom, break my galling chain,
" And Albion's ſceptre to my hand reſtore,
" To court my friendſhip ſpeciouſly you deign,
" You drop the tear, commiſeration feign,
" And greetings foreign to your heart repeat.
" Know, baſe diſſembler! that with like diſdain
" Your terrors and your blandiſhments I treat,
" With like contempt your hate and amity I meet!"

LXXII.

He ſaid, and follow'd by the ſplendid hoſt
Forth from the hall triumphantly he went.
HENRY remain'd, in deep reflection loſt,
His eyes intently on the portal bent,
While warring paſſions in his boſom pent,
And rage, to phrenzy wound, conſum'd his ſoul.
When lo! the vaulted roof with cries was rent,
Sounds of deſpair were heard and curſes foul,
And 'mid the clamour ſtrange roſe many a ghaſtly howl.

LXXIII.

" Heard ye yon din?" the trembling Prince exclaim'd,
" Methought, amid thoſe exclamations dire,
" Some ruthleſs Dæmon my ſad doom proclaim'd.
" Mark where he ſits, enthron'd in clouds of fire!
" Save me, Oh ſave me from his blaſting ire!
" See, where around him troops of ſpectres ſtand!
" Now, 'gainſt me lone and helpleſs they conſpire,
" Now, arm'd with vengeance, view th' infatiate band,
" As each his wings extends, and waves his threat'ning [hand!"

LXXIV.

" My Liege!" ſaid ADOLPH, " no ſuch ſounds we heard,
" Nor have ſuch phantoms, as your words beſpeak,
" To us, who here obſervant ſtand, appear'd."
" 'Tis falſe," cried HENRY: " ſee, their ranks they break,
" With flight abrupt and ſwift deſcent they ſeek
" To pierce my boſom with a blazing dart!
" Hark! heard ye not that loud and piercing ſhriek?
" The venom ſpreads with agonizing ſmart,
" Mounts to my burſting brain and racks my burning [heart!"

LXXV.

As thus he ſaid, fix'd and entranc'd he ſtood,
Haggard his mien, and deſolate his air:
Scarcely his heart propell'd his mantling blood,
And wildly ſtarted his diverging hair,
As, gazing upward with diſtracted ſtare,
He ſaw, 'mid mingled flames and ſulph'rous ſmoke,
Grim BELIAL's hideous form. With vengeful glare
The Fiend ſurvey'd him, and, while thunders broke,
In accents harſh and loud the Tyrant thus beſpoke.

LXXVI.

" If thus my preſence fills thy ſoul with fear,
" What wilt thou feel, when thy devoted head
" Eternal torments is condemn'd to bear;
" When vengeful miniſters around thee ſpread
" Their toils infernal and their engines dread,
" When fate's black banner is on high unfurl'd,
" When hope for ever from thy ſoul is fled,
" And, 'mid the fragments of a ſhatter'd world,
" Thro' warring elements thy ſhiv'ring ghoſt is hurl'd?

LXXVII.

" Can Heav'n by thin hypocriſy be mock'd?
" Know, vile Apoſtate! that with tenfold pow'r
" It's ample hoards of vengeance are unlock'd.
" Lo! where around thee thick'ning tempeſts lour;
" The deadly ſtorm on thee prepares to ſhow'r:
" Before it's rage thy fainting ſpirit ſhrinks,
" Flames ſcorch, and never-dying worms devour;
" At every agonizing pore it drinks
" Eſſential fire, and deep in Hell's dark caverns ſinks!

LXXVIII.

" Such are the pangs which daſtard guilt await.
" Would'ſt thou eſcape them, and 'mongſt Dæmons hold
" A juſt pre-eminence and ſeemly ſtate?
" Would'ſt thou with SATAN's Chieftains be enroll'd?
" Shake off upbraiding conſcience, and new mould
" To daring enterprize thy tim'rous ſoul.
" Where'er thou bend'ſt thy way let men behold
" Thy blaſting influence and thy dread controul,
" And curſe their ling'ring fate 'midſt tortures new and [foul.

LXXIX.

" Haſte to Sicilia's blood-polluted ſhore:
" Break the receſſes of the royal dead;
" On proud Salerno wide deſtruction pour,
" Horror, deſpair, and deſolation ſpread;
" On Heav'n's anointed fiery vengeance ſhed;
" Stretch'd on the rack her tortur'd nobles ſtrain;
" On brave and loyal GIORDANO's head
" Place an ignited crown, 'till, mad with pain,
" His eye-balls ſtart convuls'd, and burſts his kindling [brain.

LXXX.

" So may'ſt thou deprecate th' avenging hoſt:
" So, when thou ſtand'ſt before th' infernal throne,
" Thou may'ſt with confidence proclaim thy boaſt.
" Then, when thy high atchievements ſhall be ſhewn,
" Thy blazon'd crimes, thy meed by murders won,
" Applauding Dæmons ſhall thy merits tell;
" SATAN thy ſanguinary worth ſhall own,
" Loud ſhall the chorus of thy praiſes ſwell,
" And HENRY's fame ſhall grace the chronicles of Hell!"

LXXXI.

Thus ſpake th' inſulting Fiend, and, with a look
Which pierc'd the trembling Prince, aloft he paſs'd.
High in the murky air his plumes he ſhook,
And, as his bulk he rear'd with impulſe vaſt,
The Pow'rs which rul'd the air, with dread aghaſt,
Survey'd him tow'ring. On his courſe he held,
While round him howl'd the devaſtating blaſt:
From ocean's caves his billows huge it ſwell'd,
Tore thro' his beds profound, and far his tides impell'd.

LXXXII.

Earth from it's centre deep confeſs'd the ſhock:
Back to their ſource the foaming rivers flow'd;
The mountains totter'd, and the threat'ning rock,
Which like the wreck of ſuff'ring nature ſhew'd,
Rent from it's antient baſe the champaign ſtrew'd.
The full-orb'd moon, which, cloath'd in radiance white,
Thro' Heav'n's wide arch majeſtically rode,
Felt his dire preſence, own'd his baleful might,
And, veil'd in ſanguine clouds, no more led on the night.

LXXXIII.

With craſh ſublime horrific thunders peal'd,
And quick reſponſive light'nings, as they gleam'd
With ſulph'rous flaſh, the potent Fiend reveal'd.
The mighty ruler of the ſtorm he ſeem'd:
His ſable locks in wild diſorder ſtream'd,
Widely his ſounding pinions he diſplay'd,
While ghaſtly ſpectres round him hoarſely ſcream'd;
Pois'd in mid ſky, his fatal courſe he ſtay'd,
And fill'd with conſcious pride th' aërial ſtrife ſurvey'd.

LXXXIV.

But ſad remembrance ſoon his thoughts engag'd:
No more the thunder's roll, the light'ning's glare,
Th' attendant Dæmons' cry, his mind aſſuag'd.
Like meteors glancing thro' the gloomy air,
Or comets brandiſhing their deadly hair
Portending war and woe, his eye-balls flam'd:
He gaz'd, and with a voice which fell deſpair
Denoted, and beſpoke his rage untam'd,
While echo'd Heav'n's high vault, th' imperious Fiend ex-
[claim'd.

LXXXV.

" Ceaſe, ye contending elements! to rage;
" Your caves remote, ye threat'ning tempeſts! ſeek,
" Nor longer unavailing warfare wage;
" No more around me, rattling thunders! break,
" Nor heav'n with fulph'rous gleam, ye light'nings! ſtreak;
" And ye, attendant Fiends! no longer ſwell
" The ſong of vengeance which we fail'd to wreak:
" For unprotected virtue breaks your ſpell,
" And man triumphant mocks the vanquiſh'd pow'rs of hell.

LXXXVI.

" Not thus his miſſion MOLOCH bold forſook:
" Exulting he return'd from Albion's land,
" While loud applauſes Pandæmonium ſhook.
" But we, the glorious enterpriſe who plann'd,
" On whom devolv'd our Sov'reign's dread command,
" Stamp'd with diſhonour, branded with defeat,
" How in his awful preſence ſhall we ſtand,
" When RICHARD re-aſſumes his royal ſeat,
" And Gallia's baffled King his dreaded wrath ſhall meet?

LXXXVII.

" But is the force of hell-born vengeance ſpent?
" Are there not yet exhauſtleſs ſtores of hate,
" Miſchiefs unnumber'd, in her caverns pent?
" Shall we ignobly ſhun the great debate,
" And, while our victim holds his antient ſtate,
" Debas'd and ſtigmatiz'd our glories veil,
" And crouch in abject awe? forbid it fate!
" Tho' here in foreign climes our plans may fail,
" Domeſtic diſcontents and treaſons may prevail.

LXXXVIII.

" Come then, in all the plenitude array'd
" Of ruthleſs pow'r, ye miniſters of ill!
" Be here your engines terrible diſplay'd,
" Ye potent maſters of the human will!
" Haſten your Monarch's purpoſe to fulfil;
" Bring hither Sophiſtry, Deceit and Lies,
" Prepare your ſecret poiſons to inſtil,
" Which ſlumb'ring judgment craftily ſurprize,
" Before whoſe influence dire abaſh'd allegiance flies.

LXXXIX.

" From Hell's receſs, where plans of general woe
" Employ thee, FALSE PHILOSOPHY awake!
" Let Albion's ſhores thy blaſting preſence know;
" There may'ſt thou order and religion ſhake,
" There, deep in blood, thy thirſt unſated ſlake,
" And rear aloft thy ſnake-encircled helm;
" 'Till trembling crouds their antient faith forſake,
" 'Till frantic mobs the monarchy o'erwhelm,
" And ruin wide involve the deſolated realm.

XC.

" Thither repair thy ſtandard to unfold:
" While round thee far th' enſanguin'd torrent ſtreams,
" And madneſs and deſpair their ſtation hold,
" Diſſeminate afar thy flatt'ring ſchemes,
" Thy plans of conqueſt, thy deluſive dreams
" Of crimes, of triumphs, of ſubverted thrones.
" Urge thy fleet wings; th' eventful moment teems:
" Methinks already, 'midſt her heart-felt groans,
" Her parricidal wounds, our empire England owns!"

XCI.

Thus with terrific voice the Dæmon ſpoke.
Hell's deep foundations trembled at his word;
Again around him pealing thunders broke,
Blue light'nings flaſh'd, tremendous tempeſts roar'd,
And burſting clouds in cataracts were pour'd:
Borne on the angry winds, in dreadful choir,
Utt'ring loud ſhrieks, unnumber'd phantoms ſoar'd,
Unſightly ſpectres, fiends of aſpect dire,
In ſulph'rous ſmoke involv'd, or rob'd in lurid fire.

XCII.

Above them all, her ample pinions wav'd
The potent Dæmon FALSE PHILOSOPHY:
The jarring ſtrife of elements ſhe brav'd,
And, as ſhe mounted, her ill-omen'd cry,
Foreboding unknown horrors, rent the ſky.
Alluring was her look, her tints were fair,
Smooth was her brow, and melting was her eye,
Her cheek with ſmiles was dimpled, and her air
Of all that charm'd the ſenſe diſclos'd a ſemblance rare.

XCIII.

A magic mirror in her hand ſhe rear'd,
On whoſe extended ſurface, poliſh'd bright,
The gay temptations of her rule appear'd.
There was pourtray'd young reaſon's dawning light,
Diſperſing ſuperſtition's gloomy night;
There nations freed from thraldom were beheld,
Reſtor'd to liberty and nature's right,
While Monarchs from their mould'ring ſtates impell'd,
And law and faith o'erthrown, her impious triumph ſwell'd.

XCIV.

With arms outſpread Humanity was view'd,
Courting the giddy croud to venture near,
Then ſternly wading thro' a ſea of blood.
Anon would Senſibility appear,
On a dead ſparrow drop a ready tear,
And plant her dagger in a parent's breaſt.
Now meek Philanthropy her palms would rear,
And talk of peace; then ſhake her crimſon'd creſt,
While thouſands writh'd beneath her pitileſs beheſt.

XCV.

A flowing robe, of empyrean hue,
Folded around her to conceal her ſhape,
And ſhroud her foul and monſt'rous limbs from view:
A compound ſtrange of tyger and of ape,
Where many a filthy mouth was ſeen to gape,
Diſtilling human gore, and dropping gall,
Whence Treaſon, Rapine, Perj'ry, Murder, Rape,
And all that tortur'd ſuff'rance can appal,
Or wring the ſoul, were ſeen in countleſs ſwarms to crawl.

XCVI.

Tow'rds BELIAL bending her reſounding plumes,
Loudly ſhe thus the lordly Fiend addreſs'd.
" Why from my caves remote and ſecret glooms,
" Where I repos'd in uncongenial reſt,
" Diſown'd my power, my energy ſuppreſs'd,
" Provokes me now thy invocation dread?
" On what devoted land, what clime unbleſt,
" Muſt the ſtern vengeance of my arm be ſpread?
" Where ſhall my ſtores of wrath, yet unemploy'd, be [ſhed?"

XCVII.

" Brave ſpirit," cried he, " well thy zeal I know,
" And gladly thy thrice-welcome preſence hail.
" On Albion's realm prepare thy pow'r to ſhew:
" Let thy commanding arts her ſons aſſail;
" There all thy incantations dire detail,
" High on her cliffs thy blazing torch diſplay,
" And o'er her laws and government prevail.
" Now for the proof. Let Hell direct our way,
" And ſtamp on RICHARD's fall our long conteſted ſway!"

XCVIII.

He ceas'd. Around th' infernal chorus burſt,
Of woe prophetic, fill'd with threat'nings loud,
And furious boaſt of their intent accurs'd.
Thro' the mid-air, envelop'd in a cloud
Of pitchy darkneſs, rode the Dæmons proud,
Employ'd their fatal purpoſe to diſcloſe,
And organize the miſchiefs they had vow'd.
Soon reach'd they where, unconſcious of new woes,
From ocean's green expanſe the Queen of Iſlands roſe.

END OF BOOK XI.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XII.

ARGUMENT.

Operations of the Dæmons in England, which are rendered abortive by the arrival and conduct of Richard.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XII.

I.

DARKNESS, diſmay, and terror round them reign'd,
And ſtill more horrible the tempeſt grew,
While Hell's dread delegates their courſe maintain'd.
As nearer to the deſtin'd ſpot they drew,
They claſs'd their arguments and pleas untrue,
Whoſe faſcinating charms the croud might lead
The tempting paths of ruin to purſue.
With ſavage tranſport as they ſcann'd the deed,
They deem'd their triumph ſure, and hail'd their glorious [meed.

II.

As thus on high exultingly they ſoar'd,
Oppoſing tempeſts ſeem'd to ſhake the air;
New meteors darted, adverſe thunders roar'd,
And, 'mid the cliffs and promontories bare,
Reſponſive light'nings, with ſulphureous glare,
Shed o'er the gloom profound their dazzling gleam;
While from the maſs loud yellings of deſpair
Diſcordant burſt, and many a fearful ſcream,
Like thoſe of ſuff'ring ghoſts on feign'd Cocytus' ſtream.

III.

Dread was the conflict, hideous was the war
Of fires electric, and acroſs the ſky
The mingling elements reſounded far.
BELIAL their impulſe felt: with ſcowling eye
He view'd the meteors, and erecting high
His princely front, with proud diſdain beheld
Th' infernal band, whom MOLOCH charg'd to try
Their impious artifice, abaſh'd, repell'd,
And forc'd to quit their prize, by Engliſh virtue quell'd.

IV.

Like Ætna, when from forth it's caverns deep
A fiery column ſeems at Heav'n to aim,
And molten lavas down it's huge ſides ſweep,
Burſt his ungovern'd wrath: contempt and ſhame
Conſum'd his breaſt with agonizing flame.
" What leads ye thus," he cried, " your flight to trace?
" Avenging SATAN ſhall your doom proclaim;
" All hell ſhall echo with your foul diſgrace,
" And tenfold pangs reward your dereliction baſe!"

V.

" No treach'rous purpoſe, no occaſion ſlight,"
Him anſwer'd CIVIL DISCORD, " leads my band
" Thus to impel from Albion's ſhores their flight.
" Appointed there, by MOLOCH's dread command,
" To ſpread contagion o'er the ſuff'ring land,
" And ſhake the old foundations of the ſtate,
" Our efforts well fulfill'd the woes he plann'd:
" Swift and remorſeleſs miniſters of fate,
" We ſtretch'd our ample rule, our deſolating hate.

VI.

" Had'ſt thou, imperious Fiend! as well atchiev'd
" The purpoſe by our potent Monarch taught;
" If the deſign by him ſo well conceiv'd,
" Mature in wiſdom, with experience fraught,
" Thy boaſted pow'r ſucceſsfully had wrought,
" Ne'er would our half-accompliſh'd toils have fail'd:
" Then joyful might we hell's domains have ſought,
" And prov'd how far our energy prevail'd,
" While our triumphant hoſt all Pandæmonium hail'd.

VII.

" But when, encourag'd moſt our taſk to urge,
" We look'd our daring object to complete,
" When bleeding England crouch'd beneath our ſcourge,
" Thy blaſted enterpriſe, thy mean defeat,
" Unnerv'd our arms, and drove us to retreat.
" His force diſbanded, loſt his fleeting ſway,
" JOHN yields to RICHARD his imperial ſeat;
" While we, thy influence curs'd compell'd t' obey,
" Nor leſs diſgrac'd, reſume tow'rds SATAN's court our [way."

VIII.

Thus ſpake the Fiend courageous, and abaſh'd
Stood BELIAL ſelf-convicted, while around
Their full-orb'd ſhields the furious Dæmons claſh'd,
And high aroſe the ſoul-appalling ſound.
Awhile his voice the madd'ning clamour drown'd,
And oft in vain to ſtill their rage he tried,
While his black brow with indignation frown'd,
And high his boſom heav'd with conſcious pride.
At length the tumult ceas'd, and thus he loudly cried.

IX.

" May ev'ry plague which ſpirits can appal,
" And all the curſes of inſulted hell,
" On thy foul tongue, preſumptuous railer! fall.
" Dar'ſt thou, malignant imp! with rancour fell
" On falſe conſtructions of my high feats dwell?
" Hop'ſt thou remiſſion of thy pangs to gain?
" Contemptuouſly thy ſlanders I repel,
" And treat thy obloquy with ſtern diſdain.
" Ne'er can my known deſerts thy venom'd charges ſtain.

X.

" Know, baſe defamer of my great renown!
" When thou diſown'd and ſtigmatiz'd ſhalt pine,
" Immortal wreaths my tow'ring front ſhall crown:
" For me their ſongs of triumph Fiends ſhall join,
" When, perfected our new and bold deſign,
" Beneath our ſway ſhall bend this proſtrate ſtate.
" Then, when freſh glories and ſucceſs are mine,
" Shrink from my vengeance; trembling then await
" A retribution ſure from BELIAL's endleſs hate!"

XI.

" Ceaſe this inſenſate brawl! let judgment clear,"
Cried FALSE PHILOSOPHY, " her ſeat reſume:
" Calmly let each my ſober mandate hear.
" With high commiſſion charg'd, behold! I come
" The darken'd world with novel lights t' illume;
" Thro' ſeas of doubt my hand ſhall guide the helm,
" My mirror ſhall diſperſe religion's gloom,
" Inundate with new-fangled codes the realm,
" And law, and government, and England's ſelf o'erwhelm.

XII.

" 'Tis mine on man's credulity to build,
" To work upon the rude and vacant mind,
" Which ne'er the ray of wholeſome knowledge fill'd,
" Which, deaf to reaſon, to example blind,
" Expects in ſophiſtry the truth to find.
" Theſe are my darling engines, theſe I prime
" With doctrines to corrupt the heart deſign'd,
" Then lead them by degrees from crime to crime,
" 'Till nations ſwell my train and own my pow'r ſublime.

XIII.

" Too long by fate from enterpriſe reſtrain'd,
" I burn my energy to ſignalize,
" And dignify the freedom I have gain'd.
" Before us, lo! our ſcene of high emprize:
" In one great cauſe unite, my bold Allies!
" Let us our utmoſt force combine, to cope
" With England's Monarch who our hoſt defies:
" Let us to vengeance give unbounded ſcope,
" Nor ceaſe, 'till full matur'd we view our budding hope!"

XIV.

She ſaid. The Fiends, appeas'd by her diſcourſe,
And anxious now to join their common aid,
Addreſs'd themſelves for flight. With outcries hoarſe,
And threats of woe, their wide wings they diſplay'd,
And cut the air: nor was their impulſe ſtay'd,
'Till, north of London's princely tow'rs, they view'd,
Extending far it's deep-entangled ſhade
Impervious to the ſun, an ancient wood,
Where many a moſs-grown oak and tow'ring cheſnut ſtood.

XV.

" Behold," cried FALSE PHILOSOPHY, " where beſt
" Congenial darkneſs may your group conceal;
" While I, alone, in borrow'd ſemblance dreſs'd,
" To bold FITZ-OSBERT may my plans reveal,
" And frame with him devices apt to ſteal
" The unſuſpecting ſuff'rage of the croud.
" Soon as your ſuccour requiſite I feel,
" My voice ſhall reach you with a ſummons loud:
" Then ruſh to perpetrate the miſchiefs you have vow'd."

XVI.

Thus ſaying, from her lips diſtended wide
She blew a vapour, which with influence drear
Within it's atmoſphere the crew might hide,
Leſt, to ſome paſſenger approaching near,
Their forms uncouth and ghaſtly might appear.
Then, her dire queſt impatient to renew,
With outſpread wing ſhe 'gan her courſe to ſteer,
Nor ceas'd her baleful travel to purſue,
'Till the far-ſtretching walls of London met her view.

XVII.

Now to FITZ-OSBERT ſought ſhe to impart
Her purpoſes of meditated wrong.
Cool in purſuit of ill, his callous heart
Knew all the turns which to deceit belong.
Grave with the old, attractive with the young,
With winding art he prob'd the ſecret ſoul;
While, by the magic of his guileful tongue,
O'er their charm'd hearts inſenſibly he ſtole,
And held their captive wills with mild but ſtrong controul.

XVIII.

Intent his private int'reſt to purſue,
Of moral right or wrong he ſeldom thought:
Whene'er the flatt'ring object met his view,
With zeal deprav'd the readieſt means he ſought,
And fortune to his wiſh obedient wrought.
The ſervile arts of flatt'ry he could try,
When harſh neceſſity ſubmiſſion taught;
But, when ſucceſsful, his demeanour high
Princes would proudly check, and potentates defy.

XIX.

He aim'd at pow'r, but not for public good:
Tho' this pretext, in each inſidious ſpeech,
He us'd to cloak his plans jejune and crude.
On public grievances he oft would preach,
Inſult the laws, the government impeach;
The People's Sov'reignty he would avow,
The holy right of Inſurrection teach,
And how to bring their lordly tyrants low,
And how to make the Crown before it's vaſſals bow.

XX.

The talents which from nature he enjoy'd,
Great, comprehenſive, and by toil improv'd,
For purpoſes unworthy he employ'd.
Thro' vice's path unbluſhingly he rov'd,
And all her varied blandiſhments had prov'd:
Nor, wrinkled tho' his front and hoar his head,
Left he the follies which his youth had mov'd;
For, tho' to paſſion he had long been dead,
A concubine for ſhew ſtill ſhar'd his ſhameleſs bed.

XXI.

Night had her zenith reach'd, when, with his crew
As late he revell'd, him the Dæmon found.
From hand to hand the well-charg'd goblet flew,
Chaplets of fading flow'rs their temples crown'd,
And mirth and noiſy laughter reign'd around.
Yet often, when the ſhallow jeſt was paſt,
Their hoſt would broach his politics unſound,
His ſarcaſms on eſtabliſhments would caſt,
And drink to the ſucceſs of his conceptions vaſt.

XXII.

And oft the ſluggard people he would blame,
Who, tho' by fortune's attributes unbleſt,
Preſerv'd allegiance, and with ſuff'rance tame
Their native rights and inborn power ſuppreſs'd.
The maudlin band his reas'ning's force confeſs'd,
And, as their voices tun'd the factious ſtrain,
Whoſe chorus loud their ardent hope expreſs'd,
The ſparkling bowl they perſever'd to drain,
And hail'd the bliſsful hour when anarchy ſhould reign.

XXIII.

When all were now with full libations hot,
FITZ-OSBERT riſing beckon'd for a pauſe:
" Be not our BALDOCK's health," he ſaid, " forgot:
" He, the firm champion of our glorious cauſe,
" As well his toils deſerve, ſhould meet applauſe.
" For who than he more openly has dar'd,
" To mock religion, government and laws?
" Than him who leſs for human curbs has car'd,
" Who better all the means of tumult has prepar'd?"

XXIV.

As thus he ſpoke, the Dæmon, who conceal'd
The progreſs of their cloſe cabal had watch'd,
Herſelf, in BALDOCK's ſemblance clad, reveal'd.
The chamber door ſhe ſuddenly unlatch'd,
And thus exclaim'd abruptly: "Friends attach'd
" To freedom and her cauſe, your BALDOCK hear:
" Mark the new miſchiefs which my brain has hatch'd,
" And that ſuperior artifice revere,
" Which on a moment's baſe can plans for ages rear.

XXV.

" While here in revelry and waſſel looſe
" Thoſe hours, which greater cares demand, are ſpent,
" Anxious to further our aſpiring views,
" To ſcenes of higher aim my ſteps I bent.
" Rife were the tidings of a new event:
" RICHARD redeem'd from rigid HENRY's ſway,
" His favour'd minion, young BLONDEL, has ſent,
" His wants before our Regency to lay,
" And aſcertain the means his ranſom to defray.

XXVI.

" Of aids immenſe he comes empower'd to treat,
" And, ere to-morrow's ſun his height attain,
" The Queen her council has decreed to meet.
" Throughout the people apprehenſions reign,
" Viſions of impoſts haunt each teeming brain,
" And undefin'd ſuſpicions round are ſpread.
" All ſeek ſociety in doubt to gain:
" Here one in myſtic ſilence nods his head,
" Some whiſper fears, while ſome more boldly ſpeak their [dread.

XXVII.

" With diligence the public marts I ſought,
" Where growing diſcontent I tried to nurſe,
" And captivating ſchemes of tumult taught:
" Then quickly haſten'd to the crouded Burſe,
" And join'd the well-fed citizens to curſe
" The weighty burthens which the ſtate requir'd.
" As I declaim'd, each uſurer hugg'd his purſe,
" And, as my well-wrought tale his fancy fir'd,
" Each, to ſecure his pelf, with heavy ſteps retir'd.

XXVIII.

" To many a convent and religious houſe
" I paſs'd, and, as on ſubſidies I ſpoke,
" I found my eloquence their zeal arouſe.
" While thus my efforts diſcontent awoke,
" And murmurs loud from every quarter broke,
" I charged TRESILIAN with obſervant heed
" The cred'lous mob to fury to provoke,
" And, with the dawn, his clam'rous bands to lead
" To Smithfield and St. Paul's a mutiny to breed.

XXIX.

" So far then are my projects all mature:
" On you their final iſſue muſt depend,
" 'Tis your's their full completion to aſſure.
" Whene'er the huſtings proudly you aſcend,
" To you the raptur'd populace attend,
" You the protector of their rights they hail,
" The People's Guardian, and the poor man's friend.
" Let not, when fortune ſmiles, your efforts fail,
" But to the fav'ring breeze expand your flowing ſail!"

XXX.

As thus ſhe ſpoke, tumultuous plaudits burſt:
While freſh libations hail'd their welcome gueſt,
The noiſy patriots his deſert rehears'd.
At length, his voice prevailing o'er the reſt,
FITZ-OSBERT thus his bold compeer addreſs'd.
" Ere this, my BALDOCK! thy ſuperior worth
" With admiration has my mind impreſs'd:
" Now bow I to the talents which gave birth
" To ſchemes, which may redeem the ſubjugated earth.

XXXI.

" 'Tis true, in deſp'rate poſture are we plac'd:
" Proſcrib'd by all, purſued by RICHARD's hate,
" Our faith ſuſpected held, our names diſgrac'd,
" Our heads obnoxious to a harſher fate.
" The rich our practices abhor; the great,
" From the exceſſes of our tutor'd croud,
" Prognoſticate the downfal of their ſtate,
" And, arguing from our principles avow'd,
" Trembling foretel the ills which Albion's face may cloud.

XXXII.

" But, if thus deſp'rate are our future views,
" So deſp'rate be the purpoſe of our ſoul.
" Of ills the leſſer prudence bids us chuſe.
" Our's be the effort fortune to controul,
" To ſnatch at fame, to reach ambition's goal,
" And from our paſt defeats new ſtrength t' aſſume.
" Let each again ſalute the gen'rous bowl!
" To-morrow's ſun ſhall light us to the tomb,
" Or view this proſtrate land await from us it's doom!"

XXXIII.

He ſaid. The Fiend thus haſten'd to reply.
" United in one great and common cauſe,
" On thy ſuperior talents we rely.
" Yet, ere we act, a moment let us pauſe,
" Since thus, for more than fame or light applauſe,
" We dare encounter perils yet unknown.
" He, who in Civil Broil his weapon draws,
" Muſt truſt to energy and force alone:
" From his determin'd hand the ſcabbard muſt be thrown.

XXXIV.

" Our lines of action we muſt therefore chuſe,
" Muſt ſtrain each nerve, and all that ſtrength can give,
" And all that talents can ſuggeſt, muſt uſe.
" Thoſe, who ſupreme in RICHARD's favour live,
" To check our progreſs eagerly will ſtrive;
" Nor can we hope, that he, againſt whoſe ſway
" We thus conſpire, our treaſons will forgive.
" It well behoves us then our plans to lay,
" And frame our great deſign while ſafely yet we may.

XXXV.

" When you the cred'lous citizens addreſs,
" In terms pathetic for their inſults grieve:
" Speak of the ſuff'rings which the ſtate oppreſs:
" With phraſe high-ſounding, lead them to believe
" Their greedy governors their faith deceive,
" And drain their purſes for their proper uſe:
" Inſtruct them how their errors to retrieve,
" Give hints of freſh oppreſſions and abuſe,
" Of plans in embrio yet, and deep-concerted views.

XXXVI.

" 'Tis wond'rous how the magic of a word,
" With emphaſis pronounc'd and boldly vouch'd,
" Can fortify an argument abſurd.
" By hardy lies in fervid language couch'd
" The ſtubborn feelings of a mob are touch'd:
" Let thy experienc̄'d hand but preſs the ſpring,
" And thoſe, who yeſterday obedient crouch'd,
" Will make the air with madd'ning tumult ring,
" Defy the laws, and mock Religion and their King.

XXXVII.

" Be thine the taſk their paſſions to inflame:
" Prepare them well, and leave the reſt to me.
" A ſcheme I have to bend them to our aim,
" To ſhew how ill the Rights of Man agree,
" With what their Lawyers, Prieſts and Kings decree;
" The doctrine of Reſiſtance to inſtil;
" To teach them that, for Nations to be Free,
" For Men, born Equal, Nature's ſcale to fill,
" They need but feel their ſtrength and boldly ſpeak their [will.

XXXVIII.

" But more of this when fit occaſion ſuits.
" My hand ſhall ſcatter far rebellion's ſeed,
" And fatal ſhall be found it's deadly fruits.
" Lo! where the dawn appears: with inſtant ſpeed
" Let each his ſtation to aſſume proceed.
" FITZ-OSBERT and myſelf to Smithfield go:
" Thence, when my voice ſhall have proclaim'd my creed,
" Our bands ſhall ruſh, and England's pow'rs ſhall know,
" How deeply ſinks the ſhaft when we direct the blow."

XXXIX.

As thus the Dæmon ſpoke her high beheſt,
Their BALDOCK's eloquence the crew admir'd,
With conſcious awe and ſtrange reſpect impreſs'd.
As with the firmneſs which her plans requir'd,
And with augmented zeal their ſouls ſhe fir'd,
Each to his poſt with haſten'd footſteps went.
Her views to further thus while all conſpir'd,
Th' exulting Fiend, on projects vaſt intent,
Reſum'd her form, and wide her pinions huge unbent.

XL.

Inſtant ſhe roſe, and, as aloft ſhe hung,
Her voice with potency was heard around.
With the dread note the vaulted æther rung,
The lordly foreſts bow'd, the ſtricken ground
Re-echo'd with the ſoul-appalling ſound,
And hills and vales confeſs'd it's baleful force:
Amid the battlements her walls which crown'd,
London beheld old Thames arreſt his courſe,
Shrink from his ample bed, and ſeek his humble ſource.

XLI.

As in convulſion dire all nature ſhook,
The trembling citizens, with fear aghaſt,
Leap'd from their couches and their roofs forſook:
On ev'ry ſide with tott'ring ſteps they paſs'd,
And wildly round them looks of anguiſh caſt.
Aſtounded and half-petrified they ſeem'd;
And, as ſtill vibrated the pow'rful blaſt,
The final day of doom at hand they deem'd:
Some wept, ſome breath'd a pray'r, and ſome with horror
[ſcream'd.

XLII.

The northern wood reſounded with her cry.
Straightway th' impatient Fiends with out-ſtretch'd plume
Cut thro' th' umbrageous vault, and ſoaring high,
Their deadly purpoſe eager to reſume,
Surmounted far the widely-ſpreading gloom.
They joined their leader, and with heedful care
Drank in her words foreboding England's doom:
Then, as ſhe will'd, each haſten'd to prepare
The means by her devis'd the people to enſnare.

XLIII.

Scarce had the ſun illum'd the eaſtern clouds,
And ting'd the meadows ſparkling yet with dew,
When from each quarter ruſh'd tumultuous crouds.
Tho' in diſorder ſeem'd the noiſy crew,
A ſep'rate leader each detachment drew,
And, as they march'd, inſtill'd his doctrines foul.
Their bands more num'rous ev'ry moment grew;
They rag'd, as if already Hell's controul
Dominion full maintain'd o'er each ſubjected ſoul.

XLIV.

Soon with their outcries hoarſe Heav'n's concave ſhook:
For, eager now th' increaſing mob to guide,
Some correſponding ſhape each Dæmon took.
Meantime, their ruler ſpread diſorder wide,
And ſeem'd o'er all their movements to preſide.
To Smithfield's plain ſhe led her followers loud,
Where, 'midſt his crew by kindred crimes allied,
FITZ-OSBERT proudly ſtood. Full low he bow'd,
And waving oft his hand addreſs'd the liſt'ning croud.

XLV.

" Awhile, my fellow-citizens! attend.
" Here the Defender of your Rights I ſtand,
" And, as your Guardian, as the People's Friend,
" I hail your num'rous and intrepid band
" Prepar'd the wrongs of tyrants to withſtand.
" Too long beneath Ariſtocratic ſway
" Has crouch'd this injur'd and inſulted land:
" Too long has freedom veil'd her cheering ray,
" While you beneath the rod of ſtern oppreſſion lay.

XLVI.

" Where is the virtue which your fathers grac'd?
" Are Engliſh worth and Engliſh valour flown?
" Time was, when tyranny you boldly fac'd,
" When reſolution manfully was ſhewn,
" And liberty by open force was won.
" Now, ſad reverſe! effeminate and tame,
" Tho' gall'd by chains, in ſilent awe you groan,
" Nor feel a ſpark of that cœleſtial flame,
" Which fills the gen'rous heart and goads it on to fame.

XLVII.

" Was it for You, ye blind and ſenſeleſs race!
" That RICHARD warr'd in Paleſtine's defence?
" If ſo, no doubt your profits ye can trace.
" What are they? Ye were ſuffer'd to diſpenſe
" From your hard hands the ſum of his expence,
" Your own ſubſiſtence, and your children's bread,
" All that from want your ſtarving babes could fence,
" All that from penury could guard your head,
" All that on wretchedneſs ſome comfort ſcant might ſhed.

XLVIII.

" Ye gave all this, and what was your return?
" The tyrant's grace magnificently ſhews!
" You and your houſeholds his proud regents ſpurn.
" Urge ye your wants? your wiſhes they oppoſe,
" With contumely treat you and with blows.
" Do ye preſume to taunt them with your right,
" To plead your grievances, to ſtate your woes?
" Your modeſt ſuit contemptuouſly they ſlight,
" And with diſdain your claim of ſervices requite.

XLIX.

" What more remains your ſlav'ry to complete?
" Comes RICHARD back with high renown bedeck'd?
" Do ye the conq'ring hero proudly greet?
" No!---both his fortunes and his fame were wreck'd;
" But you, fate's doom ſtill ready to correct,
" Are privileg'd his ranſom to prepare:
" 'Tis your's the maſs enormous to collect,
" From all the ſavings of your anxious care,
" From all ye hop'd your wives and progeny ſhould ſhare.

L.

" Say, does your cottage ſome ſmall comfort hold,
" Some little luxuries from toil which ſpring?
" Haſte to the mart? let them with ſpeed be ſold:
" They ſummon you their utmoſt worth to bring,
" To pay the Ranſom of your glorious King!
" Are ye reluctant? See the ſlave of pow'r
" The little all ye boaſt prepar'd to wring,
" And tenfold horrors on your heads to ſhow'r,
" That pampered ſloth may feed, and England's wealth [devour.

LI.

" Oh friends! oh once your country's deareſt truſt!
" Deſert not now your own, your children's cauſe:
" To nature's feelings do not prove unjuſt.
" Can prieſtly ſuperſtition make ye pauſe?
" The ſtateſman's craft, the tyranny of laws,
" The policy of kings, the noble's pride,
" All that ſtern av'rice from the poor man draws,
" The gilded roof, the robe with purple dy'd,
" All ſhould to action prompt, to energy decide!

LII.

" I ſee your ſouls with kindling zeal inſpir'd:
" Your ſenſibility with joy I hail.
" Now forward, and by ſacred freedom fir'd
" With force reſiſtleſs tyranny aſſail:
" Strike home, and o'er th' oppreſſor's pow'r prevail!
" Let liberty's proud banner be unfurl'd;
" Nor let your firm and gen'rous efforts fail,
" 'Till England's tyrants, from their high ſeats hurl'd,
" Prove your tranſcendent might, and edify the world!"

LIII.

Thus, with ſucceſsful effort, thro' the croud
The practic'd Demagogue his poiſons ſpread:
His bold aſſertions, his demeanour proud,
Work'd on their weak credulity, and led
Their paſſions now arous'd to purpoſe dread.
They echo'd all their daring leader ſpoke;
And, as their wrath the crafty Dæmons fed,
Rous'd by their agency loud thunders broke,
Madneſs prevail'd, and rage in ev'ry breaſt awoke.

LIV.

Soon as ſhe ſaw the multitude array'd,
And fitly, as requir'd her proſpects, claſs'd,
Thus with imperious tone the Dæmon ſaid.
" Suff'rance and tame ſubmiſſion now are paſt;
" The hour of chaſtiſement is come at laſt:
" The altar trembles, and the blood-ſtain'd throne,
" Mould'ring to duſt, before your feet is caſt.
" The injur'd people now no more ſhall groan,
" But wond'ring Europe ſoon their energy ſhall own.

LV.

" Thus it behoves you, citizens! to act:
" With fire the churches inſtantly conſume;
" Let the imperial treaſury be ſack'd;
" The rich and noble to deſtruction doom;
" Their hoarded wealth, drawn from yourſelves, reſume;
" Their wives and daughters for your pleaſure take,
" Ranſack their charms and revel on their bloom;
" Let the proud city's firm foundation ſhake,
" And from his dream of pow'r let deſpotiſm awake!"

LVI.

Not otherwiſe, than when a tempeſt hoarſe
Tears thro' the dark receſſes of the deep,
It's caverns echo to the boiſt'rous force
Which ploughs it's foaming ſurface; rude and ſteep
Mount it's huge billows, by whoſe pow'rful ſweep
The navies which triumphant rode are cruſh'd,
And time-worn rocks no more their ſtations keep;
So, with the hope of ſpoil and ſlaughter fluſh'd,
The ſavage mob as will'd th' imperious Dæmon ruſh'd.

LVII.

As 'croſs the field they bent their deſp'rate courſe,
FITZ-ALWYN met them, to whoſe truſty hand
Was delegated London's civil force.
When roſe the tumult, he conven'd his band,
And now approach'd, determin'd to withſtand
The bold conſpirators who mock'd his ſway.
Advancing with an air of high command,
He bad them their audacious progreſs ſtay,
And in more peaceful guiſe their grievances diſplay.

LVIII.

" Is this a time to breed inſenſate broil,"
Firmly he cried, " when your lov'd King's releaſe
" Spreads gen'ral exultation o'er our iſle,
" When thro' the realm rebellion's horrors ceaſe,
" And ſuff'ring England hails returning peace?
" Ere retribution on your crimes await;
" This uproar foul and peſtilent appeaſe.
" Shame on your leaders, whoſe pernicious hate
" Impels you thus to dare the vengeance of the ſtate!

LIX.

" Would they your underſtandings weak perſuade,
" That, by exactions from the poor and low,
" The ranſom of your monarch muſt be paid?
" Their evil purpoſe ſuch aſſertions ſhew,
" And prove their baſe intent: for, People! know
" Untouch'd your humble cottages ſhall ſtand,
" While from the coffers of the rich ſhall flow
" A golden ſtream, ſufficient to command
" The freedom of your King from HENRY's griping hand.

LX.

" Ere yet ſtern juſtice rear her pow'rful ſcourge,
" Declare why thus diſorderly ye chuſe
" The purpoſe which aſſembles ye to urge.
" What new-diſcover'd wrong, what freſh abuſe,
" Can this contempt of government excuſe?
" If need there be ſome burthen to remove,
" Think ye that RICHARD will your ſuit refuſe,
" He, who ne'er ceas'd his foſt'ring care to prove,
" His beſt prerogative a gen'rous people's love?

LXI.

" From him expect protection and redreſs.
" By conqueſt grac'd, and dignified by fame,
" He comes our long-ſuſpended hopes to bleſs:
" This morn his welcome meſſengers proclaim
" That Dover's high cliffs echo with his name,
" And that ere noon our Sov'reign we ſhall greet.
" Meantime, whate'er your wiſhes or your aim,
" Homeward let every citizen retreat,
" Till the glad trumpet's voice invite your King to meet."

LXII.

Huſh'd was the multitude: no more their cry
Gave token of th' enthuſiaſtic rage,
Which prompted them allegiance to defy:
Their Prætor's firm addreſs, his councils ſage,
His ripen'd wiſdom, and his rev'rend age,
To check their enterpriſing zeal conſpir'd.
Ill did FITZ-OSBERT of their aid preſage,
When, as no more their boſoms vengeance fir'd,
Each on the other gaz'd and from the front retir'd.

LXIII.

High beat with anger and diſdain his breaſt;
He ruſh'd amid the foremoſt of his band,
Whom with impreſſive voice he thus addreſs'd.
" Why thus, when honour calls, inactive ſtand?
" Why thus, when groans our ſubjugated land,
" Attend ye to a crafty dotard's tale?
" Shall we, when he commands, our force diſband,
" When vengeance calls us, and when fortune's gale
" Propels our bark and fills propitiouſly our ſail?

LXIV.

" What tho' of royal clemency he ſpeak?
" We want it not, nor are we brought ſo low,
" As pardon by ſubmiſſion baſe to ſeek.
" Be our's the taſk our native rights to ſhew!
" When torn the golden circlet from his brow,
" When rifled his Ariſtocratic throng,
" RICHARD may learn a people's pow'r to know.
" To triumphs then advance! in union ſtrong,
" On your oppreſſors' heads avenge your country's wrong!"

LXV.

As when a goldſmith holds his even ſcale,
With ſuch preciſion is the balance fram'd,
A breath to diſcompoſe it can prevail;
So when FITZ-OSBERT loudly thus proclaim'd
His fell intent, and at their paſſions aim'd,
The populace before his influence bow'd.
Again he led them on with rage inflam'd,
Again, 'mid cries and imprecations loud,
The Fiend's preſiding voice to fury urg'd the croud.

LXVI.

Arm'd with their ſtaves or faulchions, as it chanc'd,
The felon crew, with fury unreſtrain'd,
Againſt FITZ-ALWYN and his hoſt advanc'd,
Who worthily their fierce attack ſuſtain'd,
And, tho' unequal, well the ſtrife maintain'd.
Now o'er the plain the Fiends with outſpread wing
Hover'd, and wide the civic tumult reign'd,
When, ſuddenly, the air was heard to ring,
With loud and frequent ſhouts of "GOD preſerve the King!"

LXVII.

Nearer and nearer drew th' enliv'ning ſound,
Which thro' FITZ-ALWYN's band new vigour ſpread,
And ſeem'd his rude aſſailants to aſtound.
But apprehenſion ſoon was turn'd to dread,
When, in array and marſhall'd order led,
A puiſſant troop of warriors they beheld,
With England's far-fam'd Monarch at their head.
As o'er the plain their progreſs they impell'd,
Mix'd with the trumpet's note the voice of gladneſs ſwell'd.

LXVIII.

As to the ſcene of action they came near,
Trembling and pale was ſeen the trait'rous band,
Conſcious of guilt, and ſtruck with ſudden fear.
RICHARD, with looks of dignified command
Advancing tow'rds them, with an outſtretch'd hand
Silence beſpoke, and thus the croud addreſs'd.
" When once again I hail my much-lov'd land,
" Is thus my people's loyalty confeſs'd,
" Is it by foul revolt my welcome is expreſs'd?

LXIX.

" On England's wiſh'd-for and regretted ſoil,
" Scenes diff'rent far from this I look'd to meet.
" Can our long-fam'd and highly favour'd iſle,
" Where Freedom grac'd by Law has fix'd her ſeat,
" Where Arts and Commerce blooming Science greet,
" Sons ſo unworthy of herſelf produce?
" Can ſhe, where Virtue finds her laſt retreat,
" Own as her offſpring thoſe, whoſe mad abuſe
" Diſgrace her choiceſt gifts by riot and miſuſe?

LXX.

" What are the ills of which ye thus complain,
" Which thus ye ſeek by tumult to correct?
" Does not on ev'ry hand the foaming main
" 'Gainſt foreign inſolence your coaſts protect?
" Do not your harbours Europe's wealth collect?
" When war and ravage many a clime deplores,
" Does not their rage your happier plains reſpect,
" Where all her rich and variegated ſtores,
" With bountiful exceſs, benignant Nature pours?

LXXI.

" If theſe no proofs of fond attachment claim,
" Think on the priv'lege which your Laws inſure,
" Which ſtamps with dignity the Engliſh name.
" No chains the freeman bind, no walls immure:
" His humble roof from inſult is ſecure;
" There may he live, remote from care and fear,
" Enjoy his tranquil home and pleaſures pure,
" There, independent, children's children rear,
" To ſooth his age, and life's concluding paſſage cheer.

LXXII.

" Theſe bleſſings, from the cottage to the throne,
" Are your's; theſe boons to all alike belong:
" None but the Guilty the reverſe can moan.
" Here no oppreſſor, in injuſtice ſtrong,
" Can cruſh the weak, the innocent can wrong:
" Impartial juſtice holds her equal ſcale;
" The rich man's wealth, the pleader's clam'rous tongue,
" Attempt in vain her judgment to aſſail;
" Unbiaſs'd ſhe decrees, and law and truth prevail.

LXXIII.

" Nor, 'mid the happineſs which fate beſtows,
" Forget t' enumerate your Sov'reign's love;
" On his fond care with confidence repoſe.
" With your's heav'n's will his fortunes interwove,
" Doom'd him with you one common lot to prove,
" To ſhare alike your triumphs and diſtreſs.
" Then ſay what evils your impatience move:
" If ills there be, expect from him redreſs,
" Whoſe beſt ambition is his countrymen to bleſs."

LXXIV.

He ſaid. As when upon the arid plain
Exhauſted by the ſun's meridian pow'r,
Deſcends a gentle and refreſhing rain,
New fragrance breathes from ev'ry herb and flow'r,
Love's carol burſts from each reviving bow'r,
And nature, in her freſheſt robe array'd,
Owns the ſweet influence of the genial ſhow'r;
So RICHARD's voice the conſcious people ſway'd,
So their approving ſouls the force of truth obey'd.

LXXV.

Not ſo th' indignant Fiends. Abaſh'd awhile,
And aw'd to ſilence, ſullenly they ſtood,
As if conſtrain'd to quit their baffled toil:
But ſoon, intent on anarchy and blood,
With march imperious and demeanour rude
The Dæmon cloath'd in BALDOCK's form advanc'd.
Her cloſely follow'd the infernal brood:
And, while their arts the wond'ring croud entranc'd,
She cried, as o'er their ranks her ſcornful eye ſhe glanc'd:

LXXVI.

" For Tyranny when thus a Tyrant pleads,
" Can ye with patience hear his vain diſcourſe,
" While by his hand your injur'd country bleeds,
" And looks to you as to her ſole reſource?
" Where are your feelings? Where is nature's force?
" Where thoſe exertions which her inſults claim?
" Trace but your ſuff'rings to their parent ſource,
" The fatal truth ſhall dye your cheeks with ſhame,
" Harrow your hearts, and ſtamp with infamy your name.

LXXVII.

" If yet ye are to learn a People's Right,
" Or how your Tyrants lawleſs pow'r obtain,
" Attend, while thus the myſt'ry I recite.
" While Deſpots and their councils I arraign,
" Learn to regard them with a juſt diſdain,
" And Reaſon as the Teſt of Truth apply.
" So ſhall dark error and her baleful train
" Vaniſh, as peſtilential vapours fly,
" When the aſcending ſun illumes the eaſtern ſky.

LXXVIII.

" Too long has Prejudice the world miſled,
" Too long, by int'reſt and chicane deceiv'd,
" Doctrines, from fancy and tradition bred,
" Have ye as truths of ſtamp divine believ'd.
" Now, by our New Philoſophy repriev'd
" From Law's reſtraint and ſtern Religion's ſway,
" Man ſhall behold his proper Rights retriev'd:
" Illumination ſhall her torch diſplay,
" Her influence ſpread, and ſtrike our tyrants with diſmay.

LXXIX.

" Behold by her the veil from error torn!
" She ſays---By Fate's ſupreme and juſt decree,
" All ranks of men with Equal rights are born:
" Without reſpect to order or degree,
" She bids ye Man, as nature made him, ſee:
" If Independence o'er your ſouls preſide,
" Ye need but will it, and ye muſt be Free!
" In all, and each, the faculties reſide,
" Which Providence ordain'd the bark of ſtate to guide.

LXXX.

" The ſplendid truths ſhe ſpeaks with rev'rence treat:
" Let ev'ry boſom own her ſacred flame,
" Confeſs her influence and her law complete.
" Theſe Rights, ſhe ſays, the Sov'reign People claim---
" 'Tis their's alone their Governors to name;
" If they offend to drive them from the helm,
" And for themſelves a Government to frame.
" Gain but theſe points, and then the ſubject realm,
" As beſt your purpoſe ſuits, new-model or o'erwhelm.

LXXXI.

" From this conciſe and comprehenſive code,
" Thoſe, gifted by Philoſophy's new light,
" Are taught to aſcertain the only mode,
" By which the Gen'ral Intereſts can unite,
" And Human Government attain it's height.
" The Sov'reign People muſt together meet,
" And, in their Perſonal and Sov'reign Right,
" Of modelling their Conſtitution treat:
" Then, by a Compact new, the great deſign complete.

LXXXII.

" Say, did ye thus your Conſtitution chuſe?
" No, my lov'd Citizens! to you it came,
" A foul abortion, full of wild abuſe,
" Founded on Tyranny and Conqueſt's claim.
' Such as it is, your own, your country's ſhame,
" Where lurks it? No where is the phantom found!
" Then uſe your high prerogative to frame
" A Conſtitution adequate and ſound,
" And on the Rights of Man the glorious ſtructure ground.

LXXXIII.

" Where did your Anceſtors the priv'lege find
" By partial laws your freedom to reſtrain?
" What pow'r had they Poſterity to bind?
" Philoſophy rejects it with diſdain,
" And gives you back your liberty again.
" Behold! her antient empire ſhe reſumes:
" Let not her awful voice be rais'd in vain!
" Inſpir'd by her, once more our reaſon blooms,
" Each man a Sov'reign grows, a Lawgiver becomes.

LXXXIV.

" Mark her beheſt. Each generation, free,
" And unconfin'd, muſt for itſelf debate,
" Muſt on it's laws and government agree.
" She teaches too enlighten'd man to hate
" The poor diſtinctions which have ſtamp'd him great.
" By her Illumination taught to think,
" He ſcorns on anceſtorial pride to wait;
" He ſees the Artificial Noble ſink,
" And to a dwarf before the Natural Noble ſhrink.

LXXXV.

" The People's Majeſty let Tyrants know:
" Yon Deſpot from his ſeat uſurp'd impel,
" And pluck the glitt'ring circlet from his brow.
" Him let Philoſophy exulting tell,
" It is not We who 'gainſt the laws rebel,
" But 'tis that Laws our inborn vigour cramp!
" Let your free ſouls with kindling ardour ſwell;
" Let no weak feelings your exertions damp;
" In characters of blood your new dominion ſtamp.

LXXXVI.

" Seize on the Church's rich and wide domain,
" Whence to luxurious prieſts the treaſures ſpring,
" Which aid them o'er men's conſciences to reign.
" The Tythes, which from your callous hands they wring,
" Reſume, or to the gen'ral coffers bring.
" New-model and re-organize the realm:
" Each his own ruler, ev'ry man a King,
" Let individual feelings guide the helm,
" Aboliſh ranks, and all diſtinctions vain o'erwhelm.

LXXXVII.

" Such is the glorious and tranſcendent prize,
" To which Philoſophy her train invites:
" This to aſſert and gain She bids ye riſe.
" Behold the People's Friend! To urge your rights,
" And crown your hopes, his patriot ſoul delights;
" With you to triumph, or with you to bleed,
" He mocks at danger, and oppreſſion ſlights:
" With him on Reformation's work proceed,
" To full ſucceſs your ſteps Philoſophy ſhall lead!"

LXXXVIII.

She ſaid. The Fiends, with exclamations loud,
Confirm'd her ſtrange and horrible diſcourſe,
And urg'd to inſtant act th' aſtoniſh'd croud.
Advancing now with ſhrieks and outcries hoarſe,
They led 'gainſt RICHARD their tumultuous force,
With rage infernal fill'd each ruthleſs breaſt,
Reckleſs of reaſon, pity or remorſe.
As onward with accurs'd deſign they preſs'd,
Them with commanding voice their Monarch thus addreſs'd.

LXXXIX.

" Ere yet, by this declaimer's arts miſled,
" You raſhly ſtoop to his inſidious lure,
" And ruin's path beyond redemption tread,
" Attend! it well behoves you to be ſure,
" Where tend his views and arguments impure.
" Like Sodom's fruit, with outward beauties grac'd,
" They captivate the eye, the ſoul allure,
" While all within the tempting rind encas'd
" Is bitter and auſtere, diſguſting to the taſte.

XC.

" Am I a Tyrant? let my people ſay!
" No teſt but their unbiaſs'd voice I need.
" Did I the rights of Deſpotiſm diſplay,
" Argue for Tyranny, for Slav'ry plead?
" RICHARD's free ſoul abhors the monſtrous deed!
" I bad you to your Preſent Bliſs attend,
" Your actual Rights and Liberties to heed,
" On that pure Conſtitution to depend,
" Where laws diſtinct and known each Engliſhman defend.

XCI.

" Does the bold pleader call on you to ſay
" Where lurks this Conſtitution? where 'tis found?
" Tell him, that brighter than the orb of day,
" O'er England's face it's ſplendour beams around.
" Not more your iſle, 'midſt ocean's waves profound,
" It's ſtation holds, than ſtands it's baſe ſecure;
" Of Law, Religion, Truth, the wiſe compound,
" From your forefathers flows it's current pure,
" For countleſs ages fram'd your bleſſings to aſſure.

XCII.

" Tell him, it's bond deduc'd from Heav'n's high law
" By juſt gradations ev'ry rank connects:
" Tell him, that, blending clemency and awe,
" It equally th' oppreſſor's crime corrects,
" Defends the weak, the innocent protects;
" That, while it guards the Monarch on his Throne,
" The Rights of all his People it reſpects;
" That ſtill, more lovely as the more 'tis known,
" You feel it's excellence, and hail it as your own.

XCIII.

" Now ſettle what regard his ſophiſms claim.
" He bids you Reaſon as your Teſt employ
" In ſearch of Truth: I bid you do the ſame.
" Say, does not England Liberty enjoy?
" Who, when the proud invade, the rich annoy,
" Does not in Law a ſure protection greet?
" Who ſhall preſume your comforts to deſtroy,
" When, watchful pow'r oppreſſive to defeat,
" Complete and full redreſs impartial Juries mete?

XCIV.

" Wherein conſiſts the Dignity of Man,
" Which thus he urges with emphatic tone?
" What is it, but his real ſtate to ſcan,
" To guard thoſe bleſſings nature makes his own,
" T' obey thoſe laws whoſe excellence is known,
" Religion's ſacred duty to fulfil,
" To love his neighbour, to do wrong to none,
" To rule his paſſions, to ſubdue his will,
" And in creation's ſcale his ſtation due to fill?

XCV.

" In what conſiſt thoſe New, thoſe Equal, Rights,
" To which the Demagogue, with boaſtful ſcorn,
" My free and envied Engliſhmen invites?
" Is it that men with Equal Pow'rs are born?
" That none Superior Faculties adorn?
" Do not to all far diff'rent gifts belong?
" While ſome their limited endowments mourn,
" Others, with minds and corp'ral functions ſtrong,
" To high diſtinction riſe, and ſoar above the throng.

XCVI.

" Or would he in exact proportions claſs
" Our iſland's ſubſtance, ſo that each might take
" His due allotment from the gen'ral maſs?
" Let us a moment his arrangement make:
" The unſubſtantial bubble ſoon will break.
" Can his high pleaſure Nature's courſe reſtrain?
" Would not each Birth the baſeleſs fabric ſhake?
" How could each Child it's juſt proportion gain,
" How, when no more remain'd, his Equal Right obtain?

XCVII.

" Does he Varieties of Rank accuſe?
" Would he, that what all equally admire
" All ſhould for ever equally refuſe?
" Firſt let him quench that ſpark of heav'nly fire,
" Which prompts us high diſtinction to deſire,
" Which by progreſſive ſteps to virtue leads,
" And all that worth and patriotiſm inſpire;
" Which urges on the ſoul to loftier deeds,
" For which the ſtateſman toils, for which the warrior [bleeds!

XCVIII.

" Falſe is the doctrine, the concluſion vain,
" That would mankind of Heav'n's beſt gift deprive,
" And all their nobler energies reſtrain.
" Deſtin'd for high pre-eminence to ſtrive,
" Let them renown from virtuous toils derive,
" And by deſert adorn their humble name.
" Then may a man be truly ſaid to live,
" When his approving countrymen proclaim
" His honour well atchiev'd, his all-ſurpaſſing fame.

XCIX.

" Nor will the propoſition prove more true,
" That with the People Sov'reignty reſides.
" How ſhall ye curb, amid theſe Monarchs new,
" The talent which inferior judgments guides?
" Int'reſt in all ſocieties divides
" The gen'ral will, dominion all would gain,
" And oft in ruſſet frock ambition hides:
" Make them All Kings, what magic can reſtrain
" Their views diſcordant, or their ſep'rate pow'r maintain?

C.

" How ſhall theſe Sov'reigns their beheſt declare?
" Where, when, and how, from ev'ry part remote
" Shall they their functions to perform repair,
" And on the public weal aſſembled vote?
" Shall a Majority their will denote?
" Involuntary homage forc'd to pay,
" Thouſands of Sov'reigns then their Rights may quote,
" While, driv'n their neighb'ring monarchs to obey,
" They crouch before their rule, and ſhrink beneath their [ſway.

CI.

" No, ſays the crafty demagogue, the will
" Of each his own concerns muſt regulate.
" Mark now, how this his object will fulfil.
" Each individual repreſents the ſtate:
" No public councils then, no more debate,
" But all what ſuits their ſep'rate purpoſe chuſe;
" None on their neighbour's diſpenſation wait,
" All may agree, may cavil or refuſe,
" And ruin wide ſhall ſpread, and riot and abuſe.

CII.

" Again his ground he changes, and aſſumes
" The Sov'reign People Rulers may elect.
" If ſo, what of their Sov'reignty becomes?
" But how ſhall I this Proteus ſtrange detect,
" When next he ſays, To cure the ſtate's defect,
" The People may, by one ſupreme compact,
" New model it, and all it's faults correct?
" If they indeed ſuch mock'ry can tranſact,
" Who, if his doctrine holds, ſhall ratify their act?

CIII.

" No laws, he ſaid, Poſterity can bind,
" Or thoſe who have not by their votes concurr'd;
" That, as by nature all are unconfin'd,
" Each generation muſt in turn be heard,
" And each ſucceſſive ſanction be preferr'd.
" If ſo, his grand compact, his ſuffrage full,
" Compels him to the conſequence abſurd,
" That this Supreme, Unalterable rule,
" Each new-born babe may change, may fruſtrate, or annul.

CIV.

" Such is the Code, ſophiſtical and new,
" By which he hopes your paſſions to awake.
" Now mark his purpoſe, and diſcern his view.
" He looks my gen'rous Engliſhmen to make
" His engines England's commonwealth to ſhake,
" To lead you on thro' unheard crimes he tries,
" To ſpurn religion, and your laws to break,
" That he, FITZ-OSBERT, and their crew may riſe,
" And, by their country's fall, attain their wiſh'd-for prize.

CV.

" And, if they could their parent ſtate deſtroy,
" Have you reflected how their new-found ſway
" Theſe arbitrary deſpots would employ?
" Like vultures ſwooping on their helpleſs prey,
" Their bloody tyranny they would diſplay,
" Your wealth with greedy av'rice would devour,
" Laugh at your groans, and mock at your diſmay.
" None ſo exult calamity to ſhow'r,
" As thoſe who riſe by crimes to unexpected pow'r.

CVI.

" Then think in time, and ſcorn their baſe pretence.
" Exert thoſe feelings you ſo oft have ſhewn,
" That ſteady loyalty, that ſterling ſenſe,
" By which the Engliſh character is known.
" Believe and make your Country's cauſe your own:
" Shew to theſe demagogues in treaſon bold,
" You love your Laws, your Altars, and your Throne;
" That, firm and loyal, you will ne'er behold
" Your country to her foes by home-bred traitors ſold."

CVII.

Thus ſpoke the gallant King. In ev'ry breaſt,
Deep ſank his ſage and eloquent diſcourſe:
Enlighten'd by the truth, the croud confeſs'd
It's potent influence and reſiſtleſs force.
Far otherwiſe the Fiends: with wild concourſe
Tumultuouſly they ruſh'd, and, as they rais'd
Their ſanguinary ſhout and outcry hoarſe,
Harſh thunders roll'd around, blue light'nings blaz'd,
And ſhook the earth, as if by dire portents amaz'd.

CVIII.

Each moment grew more fertile in alarms,
And, 'mid the craſh of elements, aroſe
The ſhrieks of Dæmons ſummoning to arms,
When RICHARD loud exclaim'd: " No mortal foes
" Can thus the courſe of nature diſcompoſe:
" With more than human inſtruments they deal.
" To Him, who Hell's foul purpoſe can diſcloſe,
" Let us, my friends! with confidence appeal,
" Let us implore our GOD their preſence to reveal.

CIX.

" Oh Thou! before whoſe all-tranſcendent name
" Th' infernal pow'rs in mute obedience bend,
" Protect us, and defeat their trait'rous aim!
" To England and to England's King attend!
" Them may thy gracious providence defend
" From pois'nous doctrines which corrupt the ſoul.
" While thus our pray'rs to thy high throne aſcend,
" Oh! may thy pow'r their hateful arts controul,
" And ſtrip the thin diſguiſe which ſhrouds their ſemblance [foul."

CX.

Thus with uplifted hands the Monarch ſpoke.
In trembling expectation ſtood the croud,
When, ſudden, on the right new thunders broke,
Rolling along with intonation loud;
Heav'n's wide concave with fiercer light'nings glow'd,
With angry blaſt th' increaſing tempeſt ſwell'd,
Enveloping th' horizon in a cloud,
Like that, which, ere by Fiat high diſpell'd,
O'er Chaos and the Deep uncouth dominion held.

CXI.

The anxious multitude, with wild affright,
Beheld the face of nature thus revers'd,
When, thro' the mantle of ſurrounding night,
Flames fetid and to ſenſe obnoxious burſt,
And ſhrieks appalling, as of ſouls accurs'd,
In chorus dread and horrible aroſe;
Loud as the trumpet, which th' Apoſtle erſt
Heard, when the Seraph propheſied of woes,
With blaſt which pierc'd the heart and life's warm current [froze.

CXII.

But ſoon more fearful prodigies were ſeen.
Compell'd their forms tremendous to reſume,
From ev'ry quarter roſe the Fiends obſcene:
Each, as he mounted, wav'd his ſable plume,
And with reſounding ſtroke cut thro' the gloom.
Hov'ring they gaz'd around, while o'er the reſt
Seem'd FALSE PHILOSOPHY her ſtate t' aſſume,
While all, ſave BELIAL, her their Chief confeſs'd.
Sternly ſhe gaz'd, and thus the pious King addreſs'd.

CXIII.

" Curs'd be the influence, which our hoſt compels
" Thus to forego our half-accompliſh'd aim,
" Which blaſts our projects and thy triumph ſwells.
" RICHARD! 'tis thine to proſper by our ſhame,
" By hell's defeat to dignify thy name,
" And, by this high atchievement, to adorn
" Th' immortal wreath reſerv'd for thee by fame:
" While we, our purpoſe loſt, our honour ſhorn,
" Prepare far hence to meet our potent Monarch's ſcorn.

CXIV.

" Exult! for more thy virtue now has done,
" Than all the toils thy conſtancy ſuſtain'd,
" Than all the glories which thy valour won,
" And all the conqueſts which thy armies gain'd.
" With FALSE PHILOSOPHY to have maintain'd
" Succeſsful warfare, to have ſtemm'd the tide
" Of principles, from Hell's receſſes drain'd
" To cruſh the world and ſpread confuſion wide,
" May well thy tranſport raiſe and juſtify thy pride.

CXV.

" Exult! meanwhile to other climes I go,
" There, in ſequeſter'd ſolitude, t' await
" A time more fit my pow'rful arts to ſhew.
" For come there will a time, preſcrib'd by fate,
" When FALSE PHILOSOPHY may urge her hate,
" And reign triumphant o'er debas'd mankind:
" When proud dominion o'er the good and great,
" When human actions, and the human mind,
" With ſway unlimited to her ſhall be conſign'd.

CXVI.

" Then, arm'd with terror and diſtain'd with blood,
" My vengeful hand ſhall rule degen'rate Gaul,
" And ſpread my far-exterminating flood.
" Then, when my ſpells the ſhrinking ſoul appal,
" Myriads of rebels ſhall obey my call,
" Wide ſhall my fatal ſtandard be unfurl'd:
" Whate'er religion ſacred held ſhall fall,
" From regal ſtate her monarch ſhall be hurl'd,
" And philoſophic mobs ſhall rule the bleeding world.

CXVII.

" Then, when amid the univerſal wreck
" Of thrones, of altars, principles and laws,
" A faithleſs nation follows at my beck;
" Then, when victorious Hell diſtends her jaws,
" And ſends forth hoſts to aid our ruthleſs cauſe,
" Let England tremble! Some ſhall then be found,
" Who here ſhall greet my doctrines with applauſe,
" Whoſe felon-daggers ſhall their country wound,
" Whoſe hands my baleful tree ſhall plant on Engliſh [ground.

CXVIII.

" Then ſhall new BALDOCKS, new FITZ-OSBERTS, riſe,
" Pervert the weak, with crouds tumultuous join,
" And, their fell purpoſe ſcorning to diſguiſe,
" Aſſociations of rebellion ſign,
" And openly with England's foes combine.
" Then horror far ſhall ſpread and wild diſmay,
" While well matur'd ſhall flouriſh my deſign,
" While the mad people law ſhall diſobey,
" Contemn the voice of GOD, and mock their Sov'reign's [ſway.

CXIX.

" Theſe and worſe ills await thy menac'd realm,
" Unleſs, what fate will ſcarce to hope allow,
" Some honeſt Stateſman then ſhall guide the helm;
" Who, while his breaſt with youthful zeal ſhall glow,
" Shall tear the maſk from frenzied faction's brow,
" Shall boldly meet the philoſophic herd,
" Shall, with an eloquence unrivall'd, ſhew
" How weak their plea, their tenets how abſurd,
" And call on Albion's ſons the patriot ſword to gird.

CXX.

" Then, ſhould indeed this prodigy appear,
" In vain would FALSE PHILOSOPHY diſcloſe
" Her bloody preſence, or her banner rear:
" Europe, exhauſted by convulſive throes,
" Redeem'd by him' from ſlaughter would repoſe;
" While envied England, bleſt with pow'r and fame,
" Would riſe ſuperior to confed'rate foes,
" Peace and good-will tow'rds all mankind proclaim,
" And high in glory's fane record her guardian's name!"

CXXI.

Thus with prophetic rage the Dæmon ſaid:
But now th' attendant Fiends impatient grew;
As widely their ill-omen'd wings they ſpread,
Round her with ſcreams and blaſphemies they flew,
And, urging her her travel to purſue,
Drown'd with their hoarſe acclaim her potent cry.
Thro' the black vapour ſoar'd th' infernal crew,
While, wrapt in mute ſuſpenſe, with uprais'd-eye
RICHARD beheld them mount and cut the troubled ſky.

CXXII.

With them the ſtorms which mark'd their progreſs paſs'd:
Yet ſtill the multitude, with dread impreſs'd,
Gaz'd on the vacant air with looks aghaſt,
When thus the King their awe-ſtruck ranks addreſs'd.
" While, as contrition harrows ev'ry breaſt,
" Each ſelf-convicted and upbraiding ſoul
" Shudders at what yon vengeful Fiend confeſs'd,
" Unite to thank the Pow'r, whoſe ſtrong controul
" Prevail'd their plans to foil, to cruſh their treaſons foul.

CXXIII.

" To all a full forgiveneſs I proclaim,
" Save to the wretch, whoſe heart to virtue dead,
" Who, deaf alike to duty and to fame,
" Preſum'd this raſh conſpiracy to head,
" Whoſe ſtatements, void of truth, my people led
" To court deſtruction and their King t' o'er-awe.
" His death ſhall cure the ills his vices bred.
" Now hence.---From errors paſt inſtruction draw:
" Fear GOD, obey your King, and venerate the Law!"

END OF BOOK XII.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Richard, at a royal banquet, vows to relieve Normandy, and to avenge his wrongs on the French King---The Abbot of Glaſtonbury preſents him with King Arthur's ſword Excalibor---Return of the Dæmons to Hell---Their reception---Satan declares his intention to undertake the proſecution of the plans formed againſt Richard---He ſets out on his expedition, accompanied by Belial---They arrive in Normandy---Deſcription of the French and Engliſh forces before Rouen.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XIII.

I.

SOON as the threat'ning tumult was appeas'd
Which from the ceaſeleſs hate of Dæmons ſprung,
The guards FITZ-OSBERT, pale and trembling, ſeiz'd,
And to the Elms conveyed him. Much his tongue
Implor'd for mercy; round their knees he clung,
And ſued for life and for his Monarch's grace.
Him on a branch, which topp'd the reſt, they hung,
Midway 'twixt Heav'n and earth: a fitting place,
For thoſe who both alike by treaſons foul debaſe.

II.

Meantime, ſurrounded by the croud, who ſhar'd
His pardon, and their royal maſter bleſs'd,
The gallant King to Weſtminſter repair'd.
Again his lovely Conſort to his breaſt
With undiſſembled ecſtaſy he preſs'd;
Again his Mother he tranſported hail'd,
Whoſe firmneſs, moſt in danger's hour confeſs'd,
When Fiends and Men her weaken'd power aſſail'd,
Preſerv'd the tott'ring realm and glorioufly prevail'd.

III.

But ſoon to ſcenes of nobler aim his heart,
Inflam'd by PHILIP's broken faith, aſpir'd:
Renown and great revenge now claim'd their part;
England's exhauſted ſtate his aid requir'd;
Normannia's bleeding province, where untir'd
With deſolation Gallia's Sov'reign reign'd,
His patriotic ſoul with vengeance fir'd:
Remembrance deep his working mind retain'd.
Of vows no more obſerv'd, of compacts now diſdain'd.

IV.

The herald's voice was heard the Peers to call,
A full and ſolemn feſtival to hold,
With more than 'cuſtom'd ſtate, in RUFUS' hall.
Thither repair'd the Knights and Barons bold;
Their well-plum'd caſques, their ſurcoats rich with gold,
Their gorgeous mails, magnificently ſhew'd:
While from the roof, triumphantly unroll'd,
Full many a Saracenic ſtandard flow'd,
And heaps of Pagan ſpoils with gems reſplendent glow'd.

V.

High at the end, in ſeemly ſtate was plac'd,
Fronting the northern gate, the royal throne,
Again by England's rightful Monarch grac'd.
On either hand a princely group was ſhewn:
Beauty might there herſelf reflected own;
There lovelineſs perſonified was ſeen,
And breathing ſweetneſs youth and nature ſhone;
All whoſe perfections could adorn the ſcene,
From charms juſt beaming love to England's peerleſs Queen.

VI.

There valour too it's due precedence found:
The brave aſſertors of religion there,
Array'd in gay habiliments, around
The ample range forgot their former care,
And, intermingling with th' aſſemblage fair,
The pow'r of female excellence confeſs'd.
Each Chief was ſeen his lady's colours wear,
And, as with modeſt warmth his ſuit he preſs'd,
A ſweet reſponſive glance his honeſt ardour bleſs'd.

VII.

The high roof echo'd with the trumpet's note,
O'er it's wide arch the ſounds of gladneſs pour'd,
And joy on Zephyr's pinions ſeem'd to float:
In rich profuſion, the capacious board
With all which appetite could tempt was ſtor'd,
With all which art or fancy could combine,
And all which bounteous nature could afford,
With goblets huge of hypocras and wine,
Pure as the nectar'd juice which greets JOVE's gueſts di-
[vine.

VIII.

The ſeventh ſervice now the hall had grac'd,
When, ſuddenly advancing from the gate,
BETHUNE, in herald's tabard rich encas'd,
Approach'd to where the martial Monarch ſat.
High on his head, upon a ſpacious plate,
A Peacock gay he bore, adorn'd with gold
And jewels, emblem of chivalric ſtate,
Which ſeem'd with conſcious pride his place to hold,
Rejoic'd his train with eyes thick-ſpangled to unfold.

IX.

Him cloſe attended an illuſtrious band
Of knightly bearing, whoſe reſolv'd aſpect
Beſpoke their paſſing worth: on either hand
March'd a fair Dame, in royal ſplendour deck'd,
Whoſe modeſt grace the boldeſt might correct:
The lovely BERENGARIA one, by whom
PEMBROKE advanc'd, his Sov'reign to protect;
While, gazing on fair CHARICLÆA's bloom,
BLONDEL appear'd his claim of duty to reſume.

X.

Their progreſs thro' the crouded hall they made,
'Till near the throne where RICHARD ſat they came,
When thus BETHUNE with low obeiſance ſaid:
" Oh King renown'd! attend, while in the name
" Of Heaven ſupreme, and of each princely dame
" Who here aſſiſts, I offer to thy hand,
" This Bird myſterious. As of right they claim
" Full retribution for this injur'd land:
" Vengeance for treaſons foul and perjuries they demand.

XI.

" Think, mighty Monarch! of Normannia's grief:
" See, where oppreſs'd by PHILIP's power ſhe bleeds;
" To thee ſhe looks for ſuccour and relief,
" To thee, the Champion of the Croſs, ſhe pleads.
" See, where the foe his bands ferocious leads,
" Where bold injuſtice innocence o'er-awes,
" Where proud oppreſſion on her vitals feeds:
" Arouſe thee, RICHARD! vindicate her cauſe,
" Call forth thy puiſſant might, and win the world's ap-
[plauſe!"

XII.

He ſaid. Loud murmurs roſe on every ſide,
And cries expreſſive of their ſtrong diſdain.
The martial King, ſlow riſing, thus replied.
" When beauty pleads redreſs of wrongs to gain,
" Her pow'rful claims can ne'er be urg'd in vain.
" My conſcious heart confirms the dire detail
" Of treaſons which the Gallic Monarch ſtain,
" And joyfully the fav'ring hour I hail,
" When o'er the perjur'd foe our valour may prevail.

XIII.

" As when, commiſſion'd by ſuperior pow'r,
" O'er Afric's plains conſuming locuſts ſweep,
" Her choiceſt fruits they unreſtrain'd devour,
" 'Till, rouſing from their temporary ſleep,
" The winds of Heav'n o'erwhelm them in the deep;
" So ſhall the terrors of our arms be ſhewn:
" No more her mis'ries ſhall Normannia weep,
" But PHILIP, trembling on his blood-ſtain'd throne,
" Shall rue his broken faith, and England's vengeance own.

XIV.

" So may my earneſt hopes completion know,
" As here, before each knight and peerleſs dame,
" On this Myſterious Bird I truly vow,
" And faithfully my purpoſe firm proclaim.
" By His eternal and tranſcendent name,
" Whoſe pow'rful will the univerſe directs;
" By Her, to whom th' angelic miſſion came;
" By every Saint, who England's weal protects;
" By all that Holy Church confeſſes and reſpects:

XV.

" By all the charms of this aſſemblage fair,
" Whoſe pleadings vengeance in my breaſt awake,
" And by the virtues of this Bird, I ſwear
" On perjur'd PHILIP great revenge to take.
" For them, and for my injur'd country's ſake,
" My arm the faithleſs monarch ſhall purſue,
" Curb his oppreſſions, and his proud throne ſhake,
" Nor ceaſe, 'till amply his offence he rue,
" And for his crimes atone with retribution due."

XVI.

As thus the King with warmth impaſſion'd ſpoke,
The knightly band confirm'd his high beheſt,
And thro' the hall loud ſhouts of tranſport broke:
A common ardour reign'd in every breaſt;
All, as they forward came, their zeal confeſs'd,
And on the ſacred Bird pronounc'd their vows,
To aid the cauſe of Normandy oppreſs'd.
But ſoon were huſh'd their clamours to repoſe,
When royal ELINOR with grace majeſtic roſe.

XVII.

" Thanks to high Heav'n!" the Queen exulting cried,
" Whoſe mercies have permitted me to ſhare
" In RICHARD'S glories and in England's pride;
" To ſee the fondeſt object of my care,
" Reſtor'd to dignity and pow'r, prepare
" To launce deſtruction on our country's foe!
" Victim no more of anguiſh and deſpair,
" Of dread ſuſpenſe and agonizing woe,
" O'er my tranſported heart I feel hope's influence flow.

XVIII.

" Oh Albion! deſtin'd to command the world!
" Rejoice, for RICHARD re-aſſumes his pow'r,
" And once again his banner is unfurl'd!
" Flown is deſpair, and paſt the dreary hour,
" When on thee adverſe fortune ſeem'd to lour,
" And from her unexhauſted ſtores of ill
" Calamity and death prevail'd to ſhow'r.
" Arouſe! obedient to the Eternal's will,
" To vindicate His ways, His juſtice to fulfil.

XIX.

" Now let baſe PHILIP tremble with diſmay;
" For retribution long delay'd is nigh,
" And tenfold vengeance ſhall his wrongs repay.
" No more ſhall England's Lion proſtrate lie;
" His lordly mane erect, inflam'd his eye,
" On Gallia's faithleſs ſons behold him ſpring:
" Like ſcatter'd ſheep before his wrath they fly,
" While bright renown waves high her ſounding wing,
" And in ecſtatic notes proclaims our Victor King.

XX.

" Oh may that valour, which Judæa's throne
" Againſt the Saracenic force upheld,
" Be now with energy tranſcendent ſhewn!
" May foul conſpiracy and guilt be quell'd!
" May PHILIP, by my hero's arms compell'd,
" Crown by ſubmiſſion his recorded ſhame!
" Then may my ſoul, his triumph full beheld,
" To kindred ſkies aſcending, bleſs his name,
" Stampt with his country's praiſe, and grac'd with well-[earn'd fame!"

XXI.

Still on her words th' enraptur'd audience hung,
Each kindling ſoul, in momentary trance,
Confeſs'd the potent influence of her tongue,
And hail'd the time, when England's ſons might launce
Her ſtores of treaſur'd wrath on perjur'd France,
When, as wide-op'ning flew the northern gate,
A ſacerdotal band was ſeen t' advance,
With geſture dignified and ſeemly ſtate,
To where the martial King in regal ſplendour ſat.

XXII.

He, who as chief the grave proceſſion led,
In ſtole and rochet fitly was array'd;
He bore a mitre on his hoary head,
And in his hand a pond'rous ſword diſplay'd.
When near approach'd, the troop it's progreſs ſtay'd;
Each, humbly croſſing with his arms his breaſt,
Bent low, and duly his obeiſance made;
Then, with an air which rev'rence deep expreſs'd,
Silent remain'd, while thus their Chief the Prince addreſs'd;

XXIII.

" Illuſtrious Monarch! whoſe auſpicious reign
" In fame's bright annals will for ever bloom,
" Permit my ſpeech. From GLASTON'S holy fane,
" To tell what lately there befel, we come.
" 'Tis known, when ARTHUR yielded to his doom,
" Compell'd fate's ruthleſs mandate to obey,
" That there the earth receiv'd him in her womb:
" But, from that period, none preſum'd to ſay,
" In what peculiar ſpot the Britiſh Champion lay.

XXIV.

" For o'er his deeds dark Ignorance detail'd
" Her web obſcure, and his ſurpaſſing worth
" In legendary tales and myſteries veil'd.
" Ere waking ſcience re-illum'd the earth,
" In the proud hall, or round the peaſant's hearth,
" Her ſtory oft Credulity would tell;
" How MERLIN's charms preſided at his birth,
" How oft he fought, and how at laſt he fell,
" And how his ſoul was doom'd t' abide the potent ſpell.

XXV.

" But his deſerts, ſecur'd on virtue's baſe,
" Some more diſcerning chroniclers have found
" With true record his energies to grace.
" Againſt the Saxon foe in war renown'd
" Nine times he bravely fought by victory crown'd;
" His patriot blood for Britain's cauſe he drain'd;
" He rous'd her from her lethargy profound,
" With hoſts barbaric glorious war maintain'd,
" And deck'd with clemency the meed his arms had gain'd.

XXVI.

" Him, their illuſtrious Chief, their darling King,
" Our Britiſh anceſtors with patriot flame,
" By their loud harps inſpir'd, were wont to ſing.
" For, as old Greece her ALEXANDER's fame,
" As Rome rejoic'd her CÆSAR's to proclaim,
" As France her CHARLEMAGNE, and as our land
" Beyond compare exalts her RICHARD's name,
" So ARTHUR's valour our fore-fathers ſcann'd,
" And told in rapt'rous ſtrains the wonders of his hand.

XXVII.

" Forgive, great Prince! th' effuſions of a zeal
" For worth departed, which an old man lead
" To talk of what all Engliſh hearts muſt feel.
" Now briefly to my purpoſe I proceed.
" Some days are paſt, ſince, for a brother freed
" From mortal vanities, a grave we made.
" Taught by a dream, he oft would intercede
" In a ſequeſter'd corner to be laid,
" Where JOSEPH's thorn far ſpread it's venerable ſhade.

XXVIII.

" With his requeſt we cheerfully complied:
" When lo! within the conſecrated ground
" A ſtone Sarcophagus our monks deſcried.
" As all aſſembled circled it around,
" In meditation wrapt and ſilence bound,
" We forc'd it to diſcloſe it's ſecret truſt.
" A female's bones, with flaxen hair, we found:
" But this as one attempted to adjuſt,
" From his rude graſp it ſhrank, and mould'ring fell to duſt.

XXIX.

" Beneath this cheſt, a ſecond we ſurvey'd,
" Whoſe pond'rous lid with rev'rence meet we rais'd.
" In it a warrior's ſkeleton was laid.
" Soon as we mov'd it from it's place, amaz'd
" On two rough pyramids of ſtone we gaz'd,
" O'er which barbaric characters were ſpread,
" Of form uncouth, and half by time eras'd;
" 'Twixt them a coffin, with a croſs of lead,
" On which engrav'd theſe words, as yet diſtinct, we read:

XXX.

" Here, to ſubmit to fate's harſh mandate doom'd,
" In rich Avalon's blooming iſland lies
" ARTHUR, his country's brave ſupport, entomb'd."
" We view'd his honour'd bones in mute ſurprize:
" Huge their proportions, and immenſe their ſize;
" Like thoſe of Earth's aſpiring ſons they ſeem'd,
" Who, as old poets feign, beſieg'd the ſkies.
" No wonder he, when living, was eſteem'd
" The Champion, who our iſle from foreign foes redeem'd.

XXXI.

" As gazing we contemplated his ſtrength,
" In his right hand this maſſy Sword we view'd:
" It's weight ſurpaſſing, it's unuſual length,
" And blade high-temper'd, led us to conclude
" This was the fam'd EXCALIBOR, endued
" By potent MERLIN with endowments high,
" And which ere while, in many a combat rude
" By ARTHUR borne, compell'd the foes to fly,
" Who in the field had dar'd with Britain's Chief to vie.

XXXII.

" With rev'rence due the King we re-inhum'd:
" And now, attended by my humble band,
" To greet this preſence, Sire! have I preſum'd,
" Imploring that, when on Normannia's ſtrand
" Our valiant Monarch may decree to land,
" The baſe invaders of his rights to face,
" This matchleſs weapon may adorn his hand.
" May it prevail the perjur'd Gauls to chaſe!
" May victory and renown our Second ARTHUR grace!"

XXXIII.

Thus ſaying, tow'rds the Sov'reign he advanc'd,
And at his feet the pond'rous faulchion laid.
The gift, which long tradition thus enhanc'd
And legends famous made, the King ſurvey'd:
It's weight he pois'd, admir'd it's maſſy blade,
And ſeem'd awhile as if immers'd in thought:
Then, riſing, to the age-worn Prieſt he ſaid,
" My warmeſt thanks are due to him who brought,
" To aid my cauſe, this ſword which Britain's glory wrought.

XXXIV.

" For him who bore it once inſpir'd with awe,
" As a propitious omen I receive
" This ſacred pledge. Fulfill'd be Heav'n's high law,
" Which thus Normannia calls me to relieve!
" Oh may my arm her inj'ries ſoon retrieve!
" May ARTHUR's ſpirit in my boſom flame,
" Teach me deeds worthy of himſelf t' atchieve,
" And, as he guides my gallant bands to fame,
" May new ſucceſſes grace his once-lov'd Britain's name!"

XXXV.

Thus ſpake the King, and wav'd aloft the blade.
The Chieftains, who his gen'rous zeal admir'd,
With eager glance the ſacred ſword ſurvey'd,
And each, as if with kindred ardour fir'd,
To ſnatch his portion of renown aſpir'd.
Now dawn'd approaching day. The Monarch roſe,
And with his nobles from the hall retir'd,
All fill'd with hope, all earneſt to diſcloſe
The worth ſo oft employ'd againſt their country's foes.

XXXVI.

Meantime, the Dæmons, fruſtrated their ſpell,
Wide thro' the gloom their pow'rful wings diſplay'd,
And ſullenly reſum'd their way to Hell.
No ray of hope their fell deſpair allay'd:
On they advanc'd, to meet their King afraid,
As if already to their awe-ſtruck view
He ſtood in plenitude of wrath array'd.
They would have paus'd: but ſtill ſome influence new
Their deprecated courſe compell'd them to purſue.

XXXVII.

Soaring reluctant thro' the troubled ſky,
'Mid the dark regions of void ſpace they paſs'd,
Which never had explor'd created eye,
But from whoſe range, indefinitely vaſt,
Imagination ſick'ning ſhrank aghaſt.
Now rag'd around them winds with fury dire,
Now black'ning waters, now the thunder's blaſt:
'Mid ſhoals immenſe of ice they ſeem'd t' expire,
Or ſcorch'd in blazing ſtreams of elemental fire.

XXXVIII.

Far different now their feelings, than when erſt,
Breathing defiance proud againſt their foes,
They left Hell's precincts, and with flight accurs'd
Haſten'd the bold cruſaders to oppoſe,
And ſhow'r on England's King remorſeleſs woes.
Them in full chorus, with reproachful tongue,
A band infernal hail'd: at every cloſe
Of their foul chant the dark receſſes rung,
As thus with joy obſcene malignantly they ſung.

XXXIX.

" Hail to the puiſſant and victorious hoſt,
" Whoſe execution has no doubt fulfill'd
" The confidence excited by their boaſt!
" In policy beyond their compeers ſkill'd,
" They come to reap the harveſt they have till'd,
" And wear the laurels they ſo well have won.
" Behold! our Prince, with admiration fill'd,
" Waits to receive you on his awful throne,
" Soon ſhall your well-earn'd fame and trophies high be [ſhewn."

XL.

They heard the taunt: with indignation gall'd
When as preparing for retort they ſeem'd,
Superior pow'r their faculties enthrall'd.
For now they Satan ſaw: his ſtern eyes gleam'd,
His ſnake-encircled ringlets wildly ſtream'd,
And high in air he wav'd his flaming ſpear:
The dread aſſemblage round him hoarſely ſcream'd
As on the band he gaz'd, who, drawing near,
Felt his conſuming glance, and proſtrate fell with fear.

XLI.

BELIAL alone his potency withſtood:
His front yet dignified he ſcorn'd to hide;
Fix'd he remain'd, and in indignant mood
His Prince offended ſullenly he ey'd,
Still conſcious of deſert, ſtill fill'd with pride,
And ſtill a lordly fiend, tho' overthrown.
At length in accents of command he cried,
" Let cowards trembling crouch before thy throne!
" To BELIAL's nobler ſoul ſuch baſeneſs is unknown!

XLII.

" Againſt my efforts had not fate conſpir'd,
" My matchleſs talents, worthily diſplay'd,
" Hell and it's peerleſs Monarch had admir'd.
" Vaſt were my plans, and ſagely were they laid;
" I look'd the fortunes of our foe t' have ſway'd,
" And England's deſolation to have wrought:
" But unforeſeen events my hopes betray'd;
" Oppoſing Heav'n it's aid reſiſtleſs brought,
" And from my vengeful graſp my deſtin'd victim caught.

XLIII.

" What BELIAL's energy has done, how well
" He ſtands entitled to infernal fame,
" Let thoſe who witneſs'd his bold efforts tell:
" His own exploits he deigns not to proclaim.
" But, long as AUSTRIA's proſtituted name,
" Long as the crimes which bloody HENRY ſtain,
" And long as PHILIP's perjuries and ſhame,
" By him effected, on record remain,
" Theſe taunting Fiends ſhall own his puiſſance was not [vain.

XLIV.

" No mean excuſe, no ſubterfuge I ſeek:
" Let thoſe to varniſh o'er their failings try,
" Whoſe ſpirits, like their paltry cauſe, are weak.
" 'Twas mine with Heav'n and all it's hoſt to vie:
" With ſoul undaunted and with ſteadfaſt eye
" I dar'd their legions, as with out-ſtretch'd wing
" And arm'd for war they rang'd acroſs the ſky,
" Commiſſion'd by ſupreme decree to bring
" Conqueſt and high renown to Albion's valorous King.

XLV.

" Alone I fac'd them. Then the boaſtful crew,
" Who now condemn me, and whoſe venom'd tongue
" Preſumes to mock me, their ſupport withdrew;
" While round their favour'd hero Cherubs ſung,
" Their ſounding harps approving Angels ſtrung;
" Him and his cauſe 'mid perils they ſuſtain'd,
" And o'er his paths their ſov'reign influence flung:
" I ſtill, tho' unſupported I remain'd,
" Provok'd the ſtrife, and Hell's extremeſt malice drain'd.

XLVI.

" Nor do I now the bold encounter ſhun:
" Speak but the word, and my impatient ſoul
" Shall ruſh to end the conteſt I begun.
" I own, dread Monarch! thy ſupreme controul:
" But for thoſe daſtard fiends, whoſe railings foul
" Obſcenely ſpeak their own, not BELIAL's ſhame,
" Thus, far as Styx and black Cocytus roll,
" Contempt and endleſs hatred I proclaim!
" Now let thy voice pronounce my judgment or my fame."

XLVII.

He ended. Thus the infernal King replied.
" Imperious Fiend! thy ardour I commend,
" And praiſe the haughtineſs and ſtubborn pride,
" Which, whether good or ill thy ſteps attend,
" Forbid thee from thy dignity to bend.
" Theſe are my darling attributes, which heal
" Remorſe and ſhame, which crimes with virtues blend,
" Which teach the ſoul conviction to conceal,
" And the firm heart againſt upbraiding conſcience ſteel.

XLVIII.

" Theſe maſter paſſions of the ſtrenuous mind,
" Whether by nature in it's eſſence bred,
" Or nurtur'd by indulgence unconfin'd
" Are beſt adapted for our uſe, to ſpread
" Our rule deſtructive and dominion dread.
" Prompted by theſe to ill, preſumptuous man
" T'oppoſe th' eternal law of Heav'n is led:
" A ſtranger to himſelf, he dares to ſcan
" The Great Eternal Cauſe, and to correct His plan.

XLIX.

" Thee then, whoſe courage riſes from defeat,
" With unabated kindneſs I ſalute,
" And as befits a potent chieftain greet.
" Henceforward be thy bold accuſers mute:
" Diſtinctions proud their malice ſhall refute,
" And high pre-eminence ſhall ſtamp the worth
" Of him, whoſe proweſs vainly they diſpute,
" To whoſe ſuperior arts we owe the birth
" Of half the mortal ills which ſubjugate the earth.

L.

" For know, intrepid ſpirit! thou ſhalt ſhare
" Thy Monarch's laurels: 'gainſt the foe of hell
" Jointly with me thy arm ſhall vengeance bear.
" What tho' inferior pow'rs have fail'd to quell
" The heav'n-defended King! our potent ſpell
" May haply blaſt the freſhneſs of his bays:
" Conqueſt and fame may yet our triumphs ſwell,
" And thoſe, who mock thee now, ſhall join to raiſe
" To thy confeſs'd renown, a monument of praiſe.

LI.

" But thoſe abaſh'd and coward dæmons, thoſe,
" Whoſe feeble ſouls, when fortune ſmiles elate,
" Poſſeſs no energy her frowns t' oppoſe,
" A harſher ſentence and ſeverer fate,
" Such as their fault has merited, await.
" Far from our preſence driv'n, let them conceal
" Their blighted honours and diminiſh'd ſtate:
" Let them our ſcorn and indignation feel!
" Away! my firm decree admits not of appeal!"

LII.

The Monarch ſpoke, and frowning wav'd his hand.
Throughout th' aſſemblage dread aroſe a cry,
And proſtrate ſtill was ſeen the fearful band,
When, rous'd from torpor, FALSE PHILOSOPHY
Diſclos'd her form bewitching, and on high
Rearing her front, the wrathful King addreſs'd.
" I purpoſe not by abject ſuit to try
" T' avert the terrors of thy ſtern beheſt:
" Too ſtrongly on my mind it's juſtice is impreſs'd.

LIII.

" Ill it becomes us thy decree to ſcan,
" When ſtill unvanquiſh'd is our hated foe,
" And unperform'd remains our ſplendid plan.
" Yet, ere far hence in baniſhment we go,
" This conſolation deign at leaſt t' allow:
" Here in the face of Hell's tremendous hoſt,
" And in thy preſence, mighty Prince! to ſhew
" That not unfounded was thy ſervant's boaſt,
" That not from want of zeal our look'd-for prize was loſt.

LIV.

" For well and ſagely were our plans conceiv'd,
" Our talents, courage, and reſources vaſt
" Superior enterprize might have atchiev'd.
" But execution our deſign o'erpaſs'd.
" Ere yet our apteſt inſtruments were claſs'd,
" Ere yet a world debas'd could give them ſcope,
" With ardour, unchaſtiz'd by ſage forecaſt,
" We dar'd with rooted prejudice to cope.
" Thus vain our bold attempt, and baſeleſs prov'd our hope.

LV.

" For long it takes to brutalize the mind:
" Religion, and the innate ſenſe of right;
" Conſcience, that monitor to each aſſign'd;
" The various proofs of Heav'n's tranſcendent might,
" It's boundleſs preſence, it's all-piercing ſight;
" Th' advantages which governments impart;
" The bleſſings which the ſocial bond requite;
" Theſe are too deeply planted in the heart,
" To yield to common pow'rs or to unpractis'd art.

LVI.

" Yet theſe too raſhly to ſubvert we tried:
" No wonder then we ſaw our efforts fail.
" But, tho' the glorious palm is now denied,
" Hereafter may our potent charms prevail:
" Then may kind fortune with propitious gale
" To certain conqueſt and unbounded ſway
" Impel our courſe, and fill our ample ſail;
" Then circled round by horror and diſmay,
" Her 'ſanguin'd creſt may FALSE PHILOSOPHY diſplay!

LVII.

" Our meaſures ſhould be fitted to the times:
" As the ſoil dictates ſhould our ſeed be ſown.
" Mankind as yet are immature in crimes:
" Howe'er to ſin and diſobedience prone,
" That ſtill more damning guilt to make them own,
" Which ſpurns at Nature and at Nature's Source,
" By zeal and patience can be wrought alone:
" Corruption muſt maintain it's ſteady courſe,
" And by progreſſion ſure attain it's perfect force.

LVIII.

" Might I without preſumption ſketch a plan,
" By which Heav'n's high beheſt to circumvent,
" And fix our empire o'er the ſoul of man,
" Thus would I realize my great intent.
" Let your experteſt miniſters be ſent
" His heart againſt compaſſion's touch to ſteel;
" 'Till, callous grown, he ceaſes to lament
" The tortures which his ſuff'ring victims feel,
" When from his hand they ſhrink, and make their vain [appeal.

LIX.

" Let them againſt parental guidance rail,
" And the reſtraints which ſocial rules impoſe
" On free and independent youth bewail:
" Let Sophiſtry with labour'd comments gloſe,
" And Metaphyſics ſpecious doubts diſcloſe,
" The arrogant half-reas'ner to enſnare;
" Till, for Heav'n's will all rev'rence taught to loſe,
" To doubt it's providence men boldly dare,
" And lead deluded herds their impious toils to ſhare.

LX.

" When thus all phyſical and moral ſenſe
" Shall be perverted into groſs abuſe,
" Let Luxury her ſubtle charms diſpenſe,
" And Pleaſure, glancing in a thouſand hues,
" Her venom in their pamper'd hearts infuſe:
" Let them their paſſions temptingly aſſail
" With glowing ſyſtems fitted for the ſtews;
" At ſtrict and formal virtue let them rail,
" And Senſuality in Grace's ſemblance veil.

LXI.

" Nor to theſe firſt eſſays alone confine
" The potent influence of infernal art.
" Of range more ample is my great deſign.
" Preach to the mob, and urge it to the heart,
" That all in nature's boons ſhould hold their part:
" Of rank and wealth th' unjuſt allotment prove;
" At bolder crimes inſtruct them not to ſtart;
" Teach them by force the barriers to remove,
" By which to guard the Crown their wiſe forefathers ſtrove.

LXII.

" Then, when matur'd my plan and ripe the time,
" My bold Apoſtles may with certain aim
" Lead on degraded man from crime to crime.
" 'Gainſt Social Order then ſhall he declaim,
" Brand Laws, and Kings, and Governments with ſhame,
" Involve the world in univerſal gloom,
" And, ſnatching at a tranſitory fame,
" Spurn at the terrors of a wrath to come,
" Of that damnation deep which laſts beyond the tomb."

LXIII.

" Dæmon!" exclaim'd the King, "thy councils ſage
" My approbation and concurrence meet.
" With Heav'n we thus may glorious warfare wage.
" Exert thyſelf thy project to complete!
" Methinks already, proſtrate at my feet,
" I view deprav'd mankind my will perform,
" And Hell's dread Pow'rs th' Eternal's plan defeat:
" Methinks, uncheck'd our dire Apoſtles ſwarm,
" And blaſted Europe ſinks beneath th' o'erwhelming ſtorm.

LXIV.

" Be thine the matchleſs enterpriſe to guide:
" The progreſs of thy delegates inſpect,
" And o'er them with unbounded ſway preſide;
" The apteſt miniſters of ill ſelect,
" Their taſks apportion and their toils direct;
" Let looſe the torrent of o'erwhelming woe,
" And to unbluſhing vice the world ſubject.
" Meantime, to Gallia's threaten'd realm I go,
" To ward from PHILIP's head the meditated blow."

LXV.

Thus his infernal purpoſe Satan ſpoke:
Enraptur'd the ſurrounding Dæmons heard,
And thus Hell's Chorus fearfully awoke.
" Hail to our matchleſs Prince, whoſe cheering word
" Shall heal defeat by meaner pow'rs incurr'd!
" Now ſhall the chalice of deſpair o'erflow;
" And, while no more our vengeance is deferr'd,
" Shame, and deſpair, and deſolating woe,
" With tenfold force ſhall break on our preſumptuous foe.

LXVI.

" Diſdainful of repoſe our King behold,
" In all his plenitude of wrath array'd!
" His potent influence, free and uncontroul'd,
" The furtheſt bounds of nature ſhall pervade.
" Soon ſhall his ſway imperial be diſplay'd:
" While England's Champion trembling meets his doom,
" While her dominion ſinks, her laurels fade,
" Unbounded empire Gallia ſhall aſſume,
" Her Genius undepreſs'd ſhall wave his conq'ring plume!

LXVII.

" Fiends! to exalt his praiſe your voices join,
" And, as our Monarch worthily is hail'd,
" Triumphant ſongs of ecſtaſy combine.
" Oft has his hand the works of Heav'n aſſail'd,
" And oft againſt it's boaſted plans prevail'd.
" Raiſe the glad ſound, in notes exulting tell,
" How Eden's walls the Prince of Darkneſs ſcal'd,
" How ADAM from his firſt perfection fell,
" And how a ſinful world was ſubject made to Hell.

LXVIII.

" Dæmons! record the artifice ſublime,
" By which the man, by his Creator lov'd,
" Was led to perpetrate the fouleſt crime.
" Declare how he, whoſe wiſdom all approv'd,
" By SATAN tempted, in luſt's mazes rov'd
" With harlots and their proſtituted train:
" How in old age, by their enticements mov'd,
" He dar'd with impious hand and worſhip vain
" To offer ſacrifice in BAAL's ſumptuous fane.

LXIX.

" Theſe felt his puiſſance, theſe confeſs'd his ſway!
" Proceed, illuſtrious Prince! to triumphs new,
" And teach mankind thy dictates to obey.
" Stretch forth thy ſtrenuous wing, thy toil purſue,
" Nor ceaſe 'till RICHARD his preſumption rue.
" Proceed! the mighty enterpriſe complete!
" Already our victorious King we view,
" With conqueſt crown'd, reſume his awful ſeat,
" While Hell applauding joins his proud return to greet."

LXX.

" Ceaſe!" cried th' impatient King: " th' eventful time
" And PHILIP's danger other cares demand.
" See, where collecting all his nation's prime,
" Our daring foe conducts his martial band.
" Ploughing the waves, he ſeeks the Gallic ſtrand:
" Now, near approaching the Normannic coaſt,
" Mark how the red-croſs banners waving ſtand;
" High mounts the clamour of the war-tried hoſt,
" And Heav'n's wide arch reſounds with their exulting [boaſt.

LXXI.

" Above him Victory ſoars array'd in fire,
" Points to the ſhore, and ſpreads her ſounding wing.
" Around him hovers an angelic choir:
" I hear their ſtrain ſeraphic, as they ſing
" The promis'd triumphs of their favour'd King.
" See where they reach the ſtrand! 'mid loud acclaim
" Behold to earth the gallant Monarch ſpring,
" His viſage beaming with cœleſtial flame,
" And firm his manly ſtep, as if aſſur'd of fame!

LXXII.

" A man more noble ne'er did I behold:
" Alike in council provident and ſage,
" In feats of arms pre-eminently bold,
" Dæmons with him may worthy conteſt wage,
" And fitly in the glorious ſtrife engage.
" BELIAL! no more indulge thy fruitleſs care:
" Ere long his fall thy anguiſh ſhall aſſuage.
" For who of human mould can 'ſcape the ſnare,
" Which pow'r infernal frames, and SATAN deigns pre-
[pare?"

LXXIII.

As thus the Monarch ſpoke his purpoſe dread,
The vault infernal ſhook with clamours hoarſe.
High in the gloomy air his plumes he ſpread,
And vig'rouſly, unconſcious of remorſe,
With BELIAL his aſſociate held his courſe,
'Till to the ſpot they came, where widely wav'd
The banners of the French and Engliſh force,
And, on the banks by Seine's broad current lav'd,
Rouen's embattled walls her ſtern beſiegers brav'd.

LXXIV.

In antient ſtate and ample range they ſtood,
Their ramparts huge, by lofty turrets crown'd,
Skirting the northern barrier of the flood.
Cloſe by the ſtream, on its exalted mound
The Citadel in ſtate majeſtic frown'd,
Where LEICESTER, long to deeds of proweſs train'd,
Defied the Gallic force, and, circled round
By Engliſh captains, well his poſt maintain'd,
And, tho' by want oppreſs'd, the brunt of war ſuſtain'd.

LXXV.

Before it's maſſy gate a drawbridge hung,
Which, when occaſion ſerv'd to gall the foe,
O'er the wide moat the gallant Chieftain flung,
And, leading croſs his bands in martial ſhew,
Taught the proud French his energy to know.
Theſe o'er the plain in varied ranks were claſs'd,
Stretch'd from the river to ST. JAMES's brow,
Which on the north, pre-eminently vaſt,
Rear'd it's enormous bulk, and leſſer hills ſurpaſs'd.

LXXVI.

There, widely waving in the air, were ſeen
The banners of full many a puiſſant Knight:
JOINVILLE, DES BRENNES, DE MARBY, and SARGINES,
DES BARRES, SABRAN, all known in Pagan fight,
Their ſtations held and led their warlike might;
SANCERRE, BEAUJEU, by equal ardour fir'd,
With CLERMONT and NANTEUIL, in armour bright,
Their martial bands conducted, and aſpir'd
T' increaſe their old renown in Paleſtine acquir'd.

LXXVII.

With theſe, long-us'd to foreign war, appear'd,
In varied armaments, a num'rous hoſt,
Who ne'er in Judah had their ſtandards rear'd,
But now aloud proclaim'd their vaunting boaſt.
There, from his diſtant Languedocian coaſt,
Illuſtrious ST. LEGER his legions brought;
There too his vaſſals D'AUVILIERES diſpos'd,
Whom brave BLANGIE the uſe of arms had taught,
And now with him new ſcenes of promis'd glory ſought.

LXXVIII.

From their Provençal mountains GRANDMESNIL,
And MONTOLIEU, with expedition came,
Prepar'd their Monarch's dictates to fulfil.
BRANCAS and FIEREVILLE, known alike to fame,
Obey'd his call: nor did ambition's flame
Leſs urge BEAUPLAN, or valiant D'EUREMODE,
With Gallia's Chiefs their ardour to proclaim.
Far as the eye could ſtretch their banners flow'd,
And ev'ry heart with zeal and expectation glow'd.

LXXIX.

Encircled by the camp a fortreſs ſtood,
Fontaine Gaalor call'd, where PHILIP held
His court auguſt, and from it's turrets rude
Survey'd the city which his force repell'd.
Inflam'd by vengeful rage and hate unquell'd,
As o'er her range he caſt his eager eye,
His lab'ring breaſt with double fury ſwell'd;
He urg'd his troops their vig'rous toils to ply,
And cruſh the foe who dar'd his boaſted pow'r defy.

LXXX.

But nor his puiſſance, nor his war-tried band,
O'er LEICESTER's ſkill and vigilance prevail'd:
Like a true Engliſh Oak he made his ſtand,
And, tho' by angry winds and ſtorms aſſail'd,
His ſtedfaſt truth and energy ne'er fail'd.
Still firm and vig'rous he maintain'd his courſe,
Still all the terrors of his name detail'd,
Prompting the efforts of his gallant force,
At once their friend, their chief, their model, their reſource.

LXXXI.

Inſpir'd by him and by their country's love,
The toils of war undauntedly they ſhar'd:
Rejoic'd their antient loyalty to prove,
The boaſtful foe with common toil they dar'd,
Nor, 'mid their ſuff'rings, of relief deſpair'd.
Approving Heav'n their conſtancy beheld,
And, ſanctioning their ardour, aid prepar'd;
For now, with ſails by fav'ring breezes ſwell'd,
Tow'rds them a royal fleet it's ſucc'ring courſe impell'd.

LXXXII.

High in the wind their blood-red ſtreamers flow'd,
Their tall prows boldly cut the foaming tide,
Their decks with warriors cloſe aſſembled glow'd,
As, with becoming pomp and ſeemly pride,
The lordly veſſels Gallia's coaſts defied.
From Rouen's walls a ſhout of tranſport roſe,
When her brave champions England's flag deſcried,
Majeſtically waving to diſcloſe
Security for them, and vengeance on their foes.

LXXXIII.

As when, o'erpaſt inclement winter's reign,
Huſh'd are his ſtorms, and, borne on Zephyr's wing,
With gay delight and pleaſure in her train,
Breathing new joys returns the genial ſpring,
Her warbling choriſters their carols ſing,
And nature hails her domination ſweet:
So, when to earth leap'd Albion's potent King,
LEICESTER's brave band ruſh'd forth their Prince to meet,
And join'd with loud acclaim his glad approach to greet.

LXXXIV.

Like MARS new-lighting on his Thracian height,
Breathing defiance proud, the Monarch ſeem'd:
His caſque with plumes bedeck'd, his armour bright,
Superbly glancing in the ſun's rays gleam'd.
Whate'er of worth heroic bards have dream'd,
All that the ſculptor's fancy can embrace,
Concenter'd in his manly preſence beam'd.
Vain would have prov'd their vaunted pow'rs to trace
His ſoul-expreſſive eye, his more than mortal grace.

LXXXV.

And fit companions for their King appear'd
The warriors who compos'd his num'rous train:
Their rich-emblazon'd banners high they rear'd,
As, ſpreading widely o'er the fertile plain
Extending to the ſouthward from the Seine,
They rang'd their camp, which from St. Catherine's height,
That on the weſt ſtretch'd far it's lordly reign,
To ROLLO's caſtle reach'd: nor mortal ſight
Their line could trace, nor tongue their numbers count [aright.

LXXXVI.

There, firſt in ſtation as in fame, once more
The gen'rous Champions of the Croſs were ſeen,
Who erſt with RICHARD fought on Jaffa's ſhore:
Brave MORTIMER wav'd high his faulchion keen;
MAULEON, ſtill in danger's front ſerene,
And bold LESTANG prepar'd their arms to wield:
There LACY bad his vet'ran troops convene;
Intrepid NEVILLE boldly grac'd the field,
And REGINALD diſplay'd his oft-diſtinguiſh'd ſhield.

LXXXVII.

HARCOURT, ST. WALERIC, AUDLEY and BOHUN,
Led forth their ſquadrons: in triumphant ſhew
The ſtandards of DUBOIS, GOURNAY, VERDUN
And gallant SOMERVILLE were ſeen to flow:
There PEMBROKE, MOUBRAY, GRANVILLE and DES PRE,
DE COURCY, BAYNTUN and ST. PAUL were found,
CASTELLUN, terror of the Pagan foe,
Illuſtrious TANCARVILLE, in war renown'd,
And VERNON, ſtill infirm from many a recent wound.

LXXXVIII.

There too BLONDEL in martial ſtate advanc'd:
Eager his new-emblazon'd ſhield to prove,
His eye o'er Gallia's far-rang'd hoſt he glanc'd.
The ſcarf he wore which England's Regent wove;
Yet ſtill his thoughts tow'rds younger charms would rove,
For CHARICLÆA's pow'r his heart confeſs'd:
In vain againſt her witching ſway he ſtrove;
Deep in his mind her image was impreſs'd,
And, as he gaz'd, now hope, now fear conſum'd his breaſt.

LXXXIX.

To the fair empreſs of his ſoul attach'd,
He led her ſmiling from the ſea-girt ſtrand:
With eager care her ev'ry look he watch'd,
And oft, her charms unable to withſtand,
Would preſs with gentle touch her yielding hand:
While ſhe, ſoft bluſhes mantling o'er her cheek,
As if unconſcious of his mute demand,
Of matters foreign to his wiſh would ſpeak,
And with benignant grace to check his ardour ſeek.

XC.

As erſt on Japhia's heights a ſpear ſhe graſp'd;
Her ſwelling boſom and her tap'ring waiſt
A cuiraſs rich with burniſh'd gold enclaſp'd:
A ſplendid caſque, with ſnow-white plumage grac'd,
And bright with gems, upon her head was plac'd.
Not lovelier look'd, on gay Cythera's plain,
The laughing Queen in MARS's arms encas'd,
When ſportive Cupids form'd her joyous train,
And Graces danc'd around, and Pleaſure held his reign.

XCI.

Fair BERENGARIA too brav'd war's alarms,
Beauteous like her, yet, as the full-blown roſe
From the bud differs, her maturer charms
Appear'd complete perfection to diſcloſe.
She ſought the Park, where, ſacred to repoſe,
And ſhrouded by it's ſtately foreſt's ſhade,
The Caſtle of Normannia's Dukes aroſe,
Still in uncouth magnificence array'd,
While o'er it's turrets huge the ſpreading ivy play'd.

XCII.

Thither with Cyprus' royal maid ſhe went.
But England's Monarch other thoughts engroſs'd:
To Rouen's walls his anxious ſteps he bent,
There to conſult of what behov'd him moſt,
And commune with the leaders of his hoſt.
The vet'ran warriors hail'd him as he came:
Their doubts were now in glory's viſions loſt,
And hope re-kindled her inſpiring flame,
Since their lov'd King appear'd to lead them on to fame.

END OF BOOK XIII.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

A diſpute ariſing between Philip and John while they are ſurveying the Engliſh hoſt, Satan orders Belial to appeaſe it---He ſuggeſts to them a plan for ſurprizing the Engliſh Camp, and carrying off the Queen---They prepare to execute it, while Satan convenes the Dæmons and raiſes a ſtorm--- Surprize of the Engliſh Camp---Night combat---Berengaria is reſcued by Richard---Chariclæa is carried off by John to the fortreſs of Fecan---Blondel undertakes to deliver her.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XIV.

I.

ON rude Gaalor's lofty ſummit ſtood
The Gallic King; with oft recurring glance
Tracing the courſe of Seine's wide-ſpreading flood,
He mark'd the Engliſh armaments advance,
As in ſucceſſion many a helm and lance
Blaz'd with the ſetting ſun: he heard a cry,
Denouncing vengeance on inſulting France,
Burſt thro' each crouded ſquadron; mounting high
The chorus ſwell'd and loud re-echo'd to the ſky.

II.

Like the precurſor of his doom it roſe,
Big with his own and with his country's fate,
With horror and accumulating woes.
Still, as it breath'd deſtruction on his ſtate,
His lab'ring fancy viſions would create,
Fantaſtic ſpectres, which the blaſt beſtrode,
Or in their cloudy chariots grimly ſat,
And ſeem'd approaching ruin to forebode.
His ſick'ning heart recoil'd as thro' the air they rode.

III.

On him attendant, and alike unbleſs'd,
Stood JOHN, the partner of his guilt and ſhame,
Whom thus with hurried accents he addreſs'd.
" Heard you yon ſhouts, whoſe piercing ſounds proclaim
" Death to our hopes, and ruin to our fame?
" Saw you, ſwift-gliding thro' the troubled air,
" Yon forms portentous rob'd in lurid flame,
" Haſt'ning, like Heav'n's dread couriers to prepare
" Triumphs for England's King, for us increas'd deſpair?

IV.

" Be theſe the pictures of a mind diſeas'd,
" By morbid fancy and diſtemper wrought,
" Or tokens of a juſtice unappeas'd,
" To PHILIP's ſoul more terrors have they brought,
" Than ere, when for religion arm'd he fought
" Judæa's ſhore, he felt from Pagan force.
" Is it thy cauſe, with guilt fraternal fraught,
" Which thus unnerves my arm? Is that the ſource
" Whence flows the ſtream accurs'd of impotent remorſe?"

V.

" No viſions have I ſeen," the Prince rejoin'd,
" Nor has my eye the ghaſtly forms perceiv'd,
" Which apprehenſion pourtrays to thy mind.
" My ſoul, more conſtant, never yet believ'd
" The tales by ſuperſtitious fancy weav'd,
" Told by ſome goſſip on a winter's night,
" When, the rude labours of the day atchiev'd,
" Her gaping audience ſhudder with affright,
" And tremble as they hear of ghoſts array'd in white.

VI.

" I leave ſuch traſh to women and to fools,
" To thoſe whom, ſhrinking from eternal doom
" And led by prieſts, imagination rules.
" For them embodied ſpirits, from the tomb
" Forcing their way, may hover in the gloom,
" Their dread chains clanking propheſy of woe,
" Tell of rich treaſures buried in earth's womb,
" And gambol 'till the dawn's loud herald crow.
" Sufficient 'tis for me life's real pains to know.

VII.

" Once was I envied and by all eſteem'd,
" Till, liſt'ning to thy arts by Hell devis'd,
" Caught by profeſſions which ſincere I deem'd,
" Thy crafty tongue my better ſenſe ſurpriz'd.
" Avenging Heav'n my folly has chaſtiz'd.
" Oh had I virtue's dictates ſtill purſued,
" Had I thy guileful blandiſhments deſpis'd,
" Then might I ſtill pre-eminent have ſtood,
" And 'ſcap'd the damning guilt of perj'ry and of blood!

VIII.

" Far wiſer had it been, ah! how more juſt!
" While yet unſtain'd my faith, a Brother's love
" And oft-experienc'd tenderneſs to truſt,
" Than thus, compell'd from Albion to remove,
" The ſcorn of him who wrought my fall to prove.
" If Heav'n will yet receive a wretch's pray'r,
" My earneſt ſuit ſhall reach the throne above,
" Victory and fame for RICHARD to prepare,
" For thee defeat and ſhame, remorſe and long deſpair!"

IX.

Thus ſpoke the conſcious Prince, while from each eye
Fell drops of agony, and deeply ſwell'd
From his torn boſom a repentant ſigh.
Diſdain awhile the King in ſilence held,
But quickly, by indignant warmth impell'd,
He turn'd to vent the fury of his breaſt,
When SATAN, who their angry geſts beheld,
Anxious to terminate their vain conteſt,
His bold aſſociate thus imperiouſly addreſs'd.

X.

" Mark! how yon fools againſt each other rail,
" Each his accomplice eager to revile,
" And fondly hoping his own faults to veil.
" Ev'n Hell's ſtern ſpirits cannot chuſe but ſmile,
" When they behold their ſordid engines toil
" To maſk their baſeneſs under virtue's guiſe,
" And conſcience with their ſchemes to reconcile:
" As if ſuch poor contrivance could ſuffice,
" Their foul intents to ſcreen from Heav'n's all-piercing [eyes.

XI.

" 'Tis tranſport worthy of infernal ſkill,
" To view the ſtruggling and half-vanquiſh'd ſoul,
" Led on from crime to crime, entangled ſtill,
" And ſtill compell'd to own our high controul:
" To hear man curſe the ſubtlety which ſtole
" Inſidious empire o'er his weaken'd heart;
" Still framing new pretences, to conſole
" For added ſin, yet by our potent art
" From virtue's bound'ry forc'd ſtill further to depart.

XII.

" Such vain conceits theſe diſputants inſpire:
" But let them thus no more the moments ſpend,
" Which active zeal and enterpriſe require.
" Let it be thine their idle feud to end:
" Take LONGCHAMP's form, and on the tow'r deſcend
" Where now with threat'ning mien they converſe hold;
" Chaſe their remorſe, and their ſtern ſpirits bend
" To deeds of dread import and action bold.
" Unveil thy ſtratagems, thy potent arts unfold."

XIII.

He ſaid. Not long th' obedient Dæmon ſtay'd:
In ſemblance of the Prieſt, whoſe counſels ſly
The firſt foundation of their league had laid,
He ſought the Princes, as defiance high
Sat on each brow, and each reſentful eye
With inward ſcorn and deep reſentment flam'd,
Beſpeaking inſtant ſtrife. Approaching nigh,
With courteous deference he attention claim'd,
And well-diſſembling thus his ſubtle project fram'd.

XIV.

" Princes! well met! At this unuſual hour,
" Your faithful LONGCHAMP, ever glad to ſhew
" His vigilance and zeal, has ſought your tow'r.
" Since here arriv'd the legions of our foe,
" My watchful cares have been engroſs'd to know
" What is their ſtate, and how they are employ'd;
" Conceiving that, by ſome immediate blow,
" The force which now we dread may be deſtroy'd,
" Ere by it's efforts prompt ourſelves ſhall be annoy'd.

XV.

" Nor has my diligent reſearch been vain.
" My ſpies the Engliſh armament have found,
" Exhauſted by their labours on the main,
" Throughout their ſpreading camp in ſlumbers bound,
" In waſſel and in wine their ſenſes drown'd,
" Their fires extinguiſh'd, and the maudlin guard
" Heedleſsly tracing their uncertain round,
" Complaining of the hardſhips of their ward,
" And envying the repoſe from which they are debarr'd.

XVI.

" Where old Normannia's palace rears it's tow'rs,
" And o'er the Park which round it's moat is trac'd,
" Half ſhrouded by the foreſt, ſternly lours,
" Fair BERENGARIA and her train are plac'd.
" It's antient battlements, repair'd in haſte,
" By an exhauſted multitude are mann'd,
" Who liſtleſsly their tedious vigils waſte,
" And who, unnerv'd by toil, would ill withſtand
" The unforeſeen attack of a determin'd band.

XVII.

" RICHARD himſelf, engag'd with Leiceſter's Chief,
" Within the city's walls conſumes the night,
" In framing projects for the town's relief,
" And marſhalling the order of the fight:
" While many a hardy warrior with delight
" And loud acclaim ſalutes his long-loſt friend;
" Pleas'd their paſt toils and perils to recite,
" They quaff the ſparkling bowl, and as they ſpend
" The hour in talk, they fail to duty to attend.

XVIII.

" In their ſupineneſs is our 'vantage found.
" While from our line, and from St. James's height,
" Loud ſhouts of war the ear of midnight wound,
" And from our engines with tremendous flight
" Our miſſile rocks on Rouen's ramparts light,
" Silent, and ſhrouded by night's mantle dark,
" Let us their camp aſſail; while on the right
" Some choſen troops, with a ſwift ſailing bark,
" Seize on the royal train repoſing in the Park.

XIX.

" On this th' attainment of my hope depends:
" Nor will, I truſt, the enterpriſe be vain.
" If on the bold attempt ſucceſs attends,
" The prize will well repay my Monarch's pain.
" While in his hands ſuch hoſtages remain,
" On his own terms with RICHARD he may meet:
" Anxious theſe valued pledges to regain,
" The baffled King inglorious will retreat,
" And Normandy again her rightful lord ſhall greet."

XX.

Thus ſpake the Fiend, and either Chief well pleas'd
His ſcheme replete with mighty miſchief ſcann'd:
Smooth'd were their brows, their anger was appeas'd;
With courteous bearing, and demeanour bland,
Each emulouſly caught the other's hand,
And claſp'd his baſe aſſociate to his breaſt.
Meantime the Dæmon his arrangements plann'd,
And, as he inſtant execution preſs'd,
Thus England's recreant Prince he craftily addreſs'd.

XXI.

" Your purpoſe if my wiſhes could decide,
" (Which flow from friendſhip and attachment ſtrong)
" You, Royal Sir! the enterpriſe ſhould guide.
" Succeſs and fame to him of right belong,
" Whom fate and fortune have combin'd to wrong.
" Beauty and love my hero's toils invite,
" Such as no poet in voluptuous ſong
" E'er yet deſcrib'd, ſuch as may well requite
" Thy former pains and ſhame with exquiſite delight.

XXII.

" Freſh as the breath of all-reviving ſpring,
" Sweet as the fragrance of the new-blown roſe,
" Blooms the fair daughter of the Cyprian King.
" Her pow'r, 'tis ſaid, thy happier Brother knows.
" Arouſe thee then, nor by inaction loſe
" The bleſt occaſion to revenge thy harms.
" Diſdain the perils which th' attempt oppoſe:
" Think on his pangs, when in thy circling arms
" The panting fair one ſinks, and yields her matchleſs [charms."

XXIII.

As ſpake th' inſidious Dæmon, o'er the ſoul
Of late-repentant JOHN a luſtful fire,
Sublim'd by hate, deſpair, and vengeance, ſtole.
" LONGCHAMP!" he cried, " thy words my breaſt inſpire
" With mounting ecſtaſy and mad deſire.
" Oh! that my Brother might himſelf behold
" The joys to which my fervid hopes aſpire,
" When in my arms his minion I infold,
" When to unpractis'd love her melting heart I mould.

XXIV.

" The triumph and the tranſport both be thine,"
Exclaim'd the Gallic King; " to thy command
" The guidance of the project I confign:
" Convey her ſwiftly to ſome diſtant ſtrand,
" Crown'd with ſucceſs, by fav'ring breezes fann'd;
" While we with energetic zeal prepare
" To lead to action our determin'd band,
" By whoſe exertions we may hope to ſhare
" In toils, more glorious made by England's King's deſpair."

XXV.

He ſaid. Forthwith, deſcending from the tow'r,
To the throng'd camp the Monarch bent his way,
His Chiefs to ſummon and arrange his pow'r.
He bad BOURGEVILLE and gallant LA VALLEE
Prepare a bark, and England's Prince obey; [VILLE
While MOUNTFORD, NANTEUIL and renown'd FIERRE-
Their dread machines againſt the town ſhould play,
And war-tried BLANGIE ſhould, with practis'd ſkill,
Invade the careleſs camp, and horror's work fulfil.

XXVI.

His foul device while thus the foe prepar'd,
England's brave King in conſultation ſat,
With thoſe who Rouen's long defence had ſhar'd.
Well pleas'd he heard bold Leiceſter's Earl relate
Their recent ſuff'rings, and their actual ſtate,
Their conſtant valour, and yet cheriſh'd hope:
As the night older grew, their grave debate
Devis'd new means to give their ardour ſcope,
And with preſumptuous France more certainly to cope.

XXVII.

While thus the apteſt modes of war they ſought,
And England's King attention yet beſpoke,
Suddenly, ſounds with dreadful import fraught
On every ſide aſtoniſhment awoke.
Throughout the town with devaſtating ſtroke
Fragments of rocks the ſhatter'd buildings rent,
Cruſh'd their proud roofs, their maſſy timbers broke:
The ſpreading ramparts felt their dire deſcent,
And the wide battlements beneath their fury bent.

XXVIII.

In ev'ry quarter, ſhrieks of wild deſpair,
With lamentations mix'd and outcries loud
And groans of wounded warriors, fill'd the air.
Vainly the trembling and half-naked croud
Sought from approaching fate themſelves to ſhroud;
Vainly to every Saint, whoſe boaſted aid
They oft with pray'rs invok'd, rich gifts they vow'd:
No interceſſion their deſtruction ſtay'd,
On their devoted heads the deadly ſhow'r ſtill play'd.

XXIX.

Soon as the din he heard, in anxious haſte
RICHARD, by Chiefs ſurrounded, left the hall,
And thro' the multitude cloſe-thronging trac'd
His courſe, oft-interrupted, tow'rds the wall.
Nor horrors him nor dangers could appal:
He bad his hoſt their engines ſtraight advance,
Exert their zeal, their victories paſt recal,
And, pouring vengeance on the troops of France,
By deeds of new deſert their well-earn'd fame enhance.

XXX.

They, nothing loth, his high command obey'd.
To the full ſtretch their Catapultas bent,
Of ſtones and darts a ſhow'r deſtructive play'd:
Swift thro' the air the charge o'erwhelming went:
The ramparts of the Gallic camp it rent,
And cruſh'd their legions with it's pond'rous force,
As in array they ſtood and order pent.
Th' enſanguin'd plain was ſpread with many a corſe,
And cries of death were heard and imprecations hoarſe.

XXXI.

Meantime, the Dæmon to St. James's mount
With ſavage exultation bent his flight,
Th' attainment of his purpoſe to recount.
Him as Hell's Sov'reign heard with ſtern delight,
Heav'n was obſcur'd with clouds: the murky night
O'er nature's face her foul dominion ſpread:
Veil'd was the moon: no ſtar to mortal ſight
Athwart th' expanſe it's twinkling luſtre ſhed;
All ſeem'd involv'd in gloom, thick-mantling, black and dread.

XXXII.

" Hither," exclaim'd th' imperious King, " repair
" With inſtant ſpeed, ye miniſters of woe!
" Hither, ye mighty rulers of the air!
" Haſten, your deadly attributes to ſhew.
" Burſting your northern caves, ye wild winds blow!
" Ye thunders roll, ye livid light'nings fly!
" Combine your efforts to aſtound our foe!
" With congregated force your labours ply,
" Shake earth's foundations deep, convulſe the troubled ſky!"

XXXIII.

He ſaid. His voice the Pow'rs Infernal heard,
And from Hell's caves their fearful progreſs wound,
Prompt to obey his deſolating word.
Thro' the thick air, in ſpells accurſed bound,
Ruth'd the fell ſtorm: the tempeſt howl'd around
With blaſt portentous: flames ſulphureous gleam'd,
Precurſors of the rattling thunder's ſound:
From the ſwoln clouds mephitic meteors ſtream'd,
And, as aloft they ſoar'd, malignant Dæmons ſcream'd.

XXXIV.

" 'Tis well, brave Spirits!" SATAN loudly cried,
" Where'er the banners of the Engliſh tow'r,
" Extend your ſway, and ſpread your terrors wide:
" But from the path, thro' which his choſen pow'r
" The Prince conducts tow'rds old Normannia's bow'r,
" Withhold your fury; there let calmneſs dwell,
" And ſilence her oblivious influence ſhow'r:
" Let his wide ſails propitious breezes ſwell,
" And to aſſur'd ſucceſs his nimble bark propel."

XXXV.

The Dæmons not unwillingly obey'd:
Their King's commandment eager to inforce,
Each his addreſs and puiſſance dire diſplay'd.
Where thro' the town and camp the full concourſe
Of mingled Chiefs they ſaw, with deadly force
They ſtretch'd their noxious and remorſeleſs ſway:
Thro' the black atmoſphere their bellowings hoarſe
Re-echo'd loud; confuſion mark'd their way,
Deſtruction wav'd her brand, and ſcatter'd wide diſma

XXXVI.

In ſlumbers deep the Engliſh bands were loſt,
From labours paſt and late exceſſes bred
When bold BLANGIE the Seine's broad current croſs'd,
And tow'rds the camp his martial comrades led.
On ev'ry hand the ſhades of death they ſpread.
Not otherwiſe, amid the fleecy train
Wolves from their mountains ruſh: with carnage red
They tear their unſuſpecting prey, and ſtain
With ſlaughter's bloody work the flow'r-beſpangled plain.

XXXVII.

Beneath their fury brave FITZ-WALTER ſank:
BIGOD, who erſt proud Acre's ramparts ſcal'd,
Their pow'r confeſs'd; his gore the herbage drank,
And fate the warrior's eyes in darkneſs veil'd.
Not VERDUN now preſerv'd his cuiraſs mail'd,
Nor could bold UMPHRAVILLE his hauberk ſhield;
Againſt them Gallic perfidy prevail'd:
No more their arms 'gainſt England's foes to wield,
By trait'rous ſwords they fell, and preſs'd th' enſanguin'd [field.

XXXVIII.

As 'mid the gloom, by bloody thirſt impell'd
And hope of booty, eager DE LA MOTTE,
With cautious ſteps his courſe deſtructive held,
The poliſh'd haubergeon and rich ſurcoat
Of SACEY loſt in ſleep he chanc'd to note.
Him, thro' his broad and unprotected breaſt,
With fatal ſtroke the baſe marauder ſmote,
Then, of his gay habiliments poſſeſs'd,
In ſearch of further prey he re-commenc'd his queſt.

XXXIX.

FITZ-WARREN, as repoſing in his tent
Exhauſted by unuſual toil he lay,
To early death his biting faulchion ſent.
Him, all unus'd to war, his father grey
Had charg'd in arms to make his firſt eſſay,
And knighthood won by valour to aſſume:
Unapprehenſive of the fatal day,
When for his ſon he ſhould erect the tomb,
Lament his blighted hopes, and mourn his hapleſs doom.

XL.

Not far remote, unconſcious of the foe
Invading thus his reſt, beneath the ſhade
Of his high canopy repos'd DE PREAUX:
Near him his golden-ſtudded arms were laid,
His ſplendid caſque, and highly poliſh'd blade;
While, as of former warlike feats he dream'd,
A ſmile of tranſport o'er his viſage play'd.
Him, thro' the ſhade as bright his cuiraſs beam'd,
Perfidious DE LA MOTTE his eaſy victim deem'd.

XLI.

Tow'rds him full cautiouſly the caitiff crept;
His quick'ning pulſe and pallid cheek beſpoke
His fear, as 'gainſt the warrior while he ſlept
With felon hand he aim'd a murd'rous ſtroke.
The weapon ſwerving with his effort broke.
Foil'd in his foul attempt, with dread he gaſp'd,
As from his ſlumber brave DE PREAUX awoke:
His yet uplifted arm the Chieftain graſp'd,
And cried, as he beheld the dagger which he claſp'd,

XLII.

" Say who thou art, and on what purpoſe bent?
" Why at this hour forbidden doſt thou dare
" With bold obtruſion to invade my tent,
" And wherefore doſt thou thus thy weapon bare?
" Speak, miſcreant! or for inſtant death prepare!"
" Mercy! moſt potent Lord!" th' aſſaſſin cried,
" Suſpend thy wrath while I the truth declare:
" If of what moſt imports thee ought I hide,
" Be thy forgiveneſs now and future grace denied!

XLIII.

" Our Gallic troops, with BLANGIE at their head,
" Are maſters of thy unprotected poſt,
" And death and havock thro' thy wide camp ſpread.
" Uncheck'd they range amid thy ſleeping hoſt:
" Ere this, I ween, full many an Engliſh ghoſt
" Skims thro' the gloom and ſhivers in the ſtorm.
" Hark! heard you not yon ſhout? 'Tis the loud boaſt
" Of bands victorious, who with ſlaughter warm
" Their courſe ſucceſsful hold, their fatal taſk perform."

XLIV.

No more DE PREAUX permitted him to tell;
With pow'rful gripe the traitor's throat he cruſh'd:
Convuls'd and lifeleſs to the earth he fell,
While from his mouth a crimſon'd torrent guſh'd.
Forth from his tent the Chief indignant ruſh'd:
" Comrades!" he loudly cried, " awake! awake!
" Behold th' inſidious foe, with carnage fluſh'd,
" Of your unguarded ſtate advantage take!
" With England's nobleſt blood their foul revenge they [ſlake!"

XLV.

He ſaid. Nor ſounded his dread voice in vain.
BLONDEL, who ſleep's ſeducing pow'r diſclaim'd,
While, to his ready harp, the rapt'rous ſtrain
Of love and endleſs conſtancy he fram'd
For her whoſe beauties his fond heart inflam'd,
Ruſh'd from his tent, and quickly tow'rds the Knight
Advancing, thus impatiently exclaim'd:
" Say, why amid the ſilence of the night
" Prevails thy cry, our hoſt from ſlumbers to excite?"

XLVI.

" Yon baſe aſſaſſin drench'd in blood behold,"
Replied the Chief: " Ere yet my vengeance due
" Gave him to death, the dreadful tale he told.
" In Engliſh gore the French their ſwords imbrue:
" By BLANGIE led, remorſeleſs they purſue
" Throughout our line their ſanguinary trade:
" While yet we ſpeak, their murders they renew.
" Quickly our ſuff'ring comrades let us aid,
" And ſave our friends whom fond ſecurity betray'd."

XLVII.

As yet he ſpoke, ſhrieks and laments aroſe,
Which either Chieftain's heart with pity wrung,
And call'd for retribution on the foes.
Forthwith BLONDEL the bugle-horn unſlung,
Which from his rich embroider'd baldrick hung,
And thro' the tube a blaſt ſo potent pour'd,
That the wide camp and Seine's embankments rung.
Tho' rag'd the ſtorm, tho' deaf'ning thunders roar'd,
Tho' madd'ning Dæmons howl'd, imperiouſly it ſoar'd.

XLVIII.

No longer now th' unheeding warriors ſlept.
Soon as prevail'd the ſound with terror fraught,
Each from his couch precipitately leap'd,
And haſtily his ſpear and faulchion caught,
Tho' ſtill what caus'd th' alarm they vainly ſought.
BLONDEL again awoke his vig'rous ſtrain,
And 'mid the tempeſt ſo diſtinctly wrought,
That, doubtful now no more, the martial train
From ev'ry quarter ruſh'd impatient o'er the plain.

XLIX.

Attentive ſtood the warlike pair, and turn'd
Tow'rds ev'ry ſide the paſſing ſteps to hear,
When eagerly advancing they diſcern'd
War-tried FITZ-GERALD and renown'd BRYWERE;
One graſp'd a ſword, the other pois'd a ſpear:
CASTELLUN next, wielding his weapon keen,
With DE LA ROCHE and TANCARVILLE drew near;
BLONDEL ſcarce mark'd them, when, with anxious mien,
Haſt'ning acroſs the field bold SOMERVILLE was ſeen.

L.

Them following HARCOURT and LESTANG they ſaw,
WARWICK and ALBEMARLE: nor long delay'd
To join them brave MAULEON and DUBOIS.
In quick ſucceſſion WARREN they ſurvey'd,
With GOURNAY, whom, as he his progreſs made,
The puiſſant Earl had ſummon'd from his tent;
ST. PAUL, and REGINALD, to join their aid,
Thro' the deep gloom their courſe together bent,
Eager alike to learn what the dread ſummons meant.

LI.

" Haſten, my brave companions!" cried BLONDEL,
" Prepare your wonted energy to ſhew,
" And PHILIP's forces from the camp repel!
" While negligently we repos'd, the foe
" Our ſtation has ſurpriz'd; already flow
" Torrents of Engliſh blood: our warriors brave,
" While yet we ſpeak, fall victims of their blow.
" Let us our fame redeem, our comrades ſave,
" Or ruſh on death, and ſhare their fortunes and their [grave!"

LII.

He ſaid. At his ſoul-harrowing words amaz'd,
Believing now, now loſt in wild ſurprize,
The Chieftains on BLONDEL diſorder'd gaz'd,
When far around them burſt diſcordant cries,
Shouts of defiance, mix'd with plaints and ſighs,
Now in the war of elements half-drown'd,
Now in full chorus echoing to the ſkies:
Too well confirm'd the fatal truth they found,
And ev'ry heart recoil'd as roſe the fearful ſound.

LIII.

" What mean theſe diſmal cries?" exclaim'd BLONDEL,
" Heralds of ruin and approaching doom,
" The fate of GRANVILLE they appear to tell.
" Hark! from his quarter louder yet they come!
" And ſee, half-ſhrouded in the midnight gloom,
" Advancing tow'rds us a tumultuous crew;
" Now they give way! now courage they aſſume!
" Now turn they on their foes, who ſtill purſue,
" And on deſtruction bent their maſſacre renew!"

LIV.

Mov'd by the piteous ſight, each gen'rous Peer
Graſp'd his good weapon, rais'd his pond'rous ſhield,
And onward ruſh'd the fainting band to cheer.
Now quickly chang'd the fortune of the field:
Compell'd to Engliſh energy to yield,
The Gallic forces in their turn gave way.
On every creſt remorſeleſs vengeance peal'd:
As if their debt with int'reſt to repay,
And emulous of fame, the Chieftains ſpread diſmay.

LV.

Nought could their proweſs and their zeal withſtand:
Each ſtroke the tale of retribution ſwell'd,
And thinn'd the ranks of the retreating band,
When, as their courſe of victory they impell'd,
By foes ſurrounded GRANVILLE they beheld.
He, like a ſtag forc'd from his native wood,
At bay his fierce and boaſtful hunters held,
Who, tho' from numbers bold and hot for blood,
Shrank from his menac'd wrath, and at a diſtance ſtood.

LVI.

Careleſs of life, their legions he aſſail'd,
And, tho' their force ſufficient ſeem'd to quell
A ſingle arm, his conſtancy avail'd
Their ſtill augmenting forces to repel.
GRAMMONT beneath his ſturdy faulchion fell:
His puiſſance felt DUPLESSIS, who 'till late
Was wont on Loire's luxuriant banks to dwell
In princely guiſe; nor did a milder fate
ROSCELIN from fair Auxerre, or bold AUMALE await.

LVII.

Theſe own'd the pow'r of his reſiſtleſs blade,
But others ſtill advanc'd with rage inflam'd,
When ſtern MAULEON, who the ſtrife ſurvey'd,
With rapid ſteps advancing thus exclaim'd:
" Hence, recreants! whoſe ignoble deeds have ſham'd
" Knighthood's renown and honour's high beheſt!"
Then, ruſhing 'mid the croud, a blow he aim'd
With force o'erwhelming on ST. VALLERY's creſt,
Who with imprudent zeal before his comrades preſs'd.

LVIII.

A youthful Chief was he, whom war's alarms
Led from the vine-clad hills of rich Champaigne,
Where bounteous nature, prodigal of charms,
Had deck'd with matchleſs gifts his wide domain.
His lifeleſs limbs were ſtretch'd upon the plain.
Him falling ſaw his oft-tried friend RIGAUD;
With indignation fir'd and heart-felt pain
He ſought t' avenge him on his furious foe:
Nor inefficient prov'd his well-directed blow.

LIX.

It pierc'd his vizor, and upon his cheek
Infixed a deep and honourable wound:
But he, impatient his revenge to wreak,
Struck on his caſque with waving plumage crown'd,
And beat the vaunting Frenchman to the ground.
Gaſping, he oft eſſay'd to raiſe his head;
But death his ſenſes in oblivion bound,
And round the warrior his dark ſhadows ſpread:
To join his comrade lov'd his ſtruggling ſpirit fled.

LX.

While thus MAULEON well maintain'd the fight,
And while the foe, victorious now no more,
Their only hope of ſafety ſought in flight,
BLANGIE, their ſtate perceiving, to reſtore
The battle loſt, his reinforcement bore,
And urg'd his hoſt the riſk of war to brave.
As, when a tempeſt rages, on the ſhore
Remounts with doubled energy the wave
Which ſeem'd t' have left the ſtrand, ſo on the Chieftain [drave.

LXI.

" Oh ſhame! when maſters of the well-earn'd field,
" When crown'd with conqueſt's wreath," he loudly cried,
" Shall Gallia's war-tried ſons the victory yield?
" Thus by BLANGIE their force ſhall be defied!"
Him heard BLONDEL, who ſtraightway thus replied:
" To thoſe, whoſe perfidy has wrought our harm,
" By Heav'nly juſtice is the palm denied.
" Tho' round thee hoſts of murd'rous traitors ſwarm,
" Prepare to meet the force of my avenging arm!"

LXII.

BLANGIE with proud diſdain his threat receiv'd.
A warrior braver or of nobler race
France boaſted not; his valour had atchiev'd
Deeds ſuch as hiſtory might delight to trace,
Or poets with immortal verſe might grace.
Anxious no more for fame, he liv'd retir'd,
'Till PHILIP's voice bad him again incaſe
His limbs in ſteel: by loyal feelings fir'd,
He now by freſh deſert to crown his fame aſpir'd.

LXIII.

As either Chief advanc'd to the attack,
Still'd was the clamour; the expecting croud
Impreſs'd with awe on ev'ry ſide fell back.
As from the boſom of an angry cloud
Heav'n's bolt burſts forth with intonation loud,
The rival heroes to the combat ruſh'd.
Their high-arch'd creſts beneath their faulchions bow'd,
Their mails were rent, their poliſh'd helms were cruſh'd,
And ſtreams of 'crimſon'd gore from every fiſſure guſh'd.

LXIV.

Each ſeem'd with equal force and valour fraught,
And both with equal ſkill th' occaſion fleet
Which varying fortune gave obſervant caught,
Now grappling cloſe, now feigning to retreat,
Now ſpringing on their foe's attack to meet.
At length mischance prevail'd BLANGIE to quell:
The turf with carnage wet betray'd his feet,
He ſlip'd, he ſtagger'd, and to earth he fell,
While waving high his blade ſtood o'er him brave BLONDEL.

LXV.

" Yield thee, Sir Knight!" the youthful victor cried:
" To thoſe whoſe gallant feats diſtinction claim
" Our Engliſh clemency is ne'er denied."
" I aſk no mercy! when a warrior's name,"
Replied the Chief, " is ſtigmatiz'd by ſhame,
" Ill it becomes him to deſire to live.
" Add to thine own BLANGIE's once-tow'ring fame,
" While he, diſgrace unable to ſurvive,
" Aſks death, which now alone can conſolation give."

LXVI.

" Tho' thy impatient ſoul," BLONDEL rejoin'd,
" Impel thee thus in haughty terms to ſpeak,
" From us a milder ſentence thou ſhalt find.
" I ſcorn to take what thou diſdain'ſt to ſeek.
" Ne'er will BLONDEL on thoſe his vengeance wreak,
" Whom fate's reverſes to his pow'r ſubject:
" He wars not with the impotent and weak!
" Bear him away: treat him with due reſpect,
" 'Till RICHARD's ſov'reign voice his deſtiny direct."

LXVII.

They led him off, tho' ſtill for death he call'd,
Proudly contemning life by pity ſav'd.
His foll'wers, by their leader's fate appall'd,
No more the fury of their conquerors brav'd,
But, throwing down their arms, for quarter crav'd:
Nor vainly, for compaſſion valour crown'd.
But now the tempeſt more intenſely rav'd,
New thunders roll'd, new light'nings flaſh'd around,
And ſhouts were heard, and cries, of pow'r the ſoul t'aſtound.

LXVIII.

Dreadful they roſe, as when a ſea-wall yields
To waves o'erwhelming, and with ruthleſs force
A foaming ocean deluges the fields,
Sweeps o'er the ravag'd plains with bellowings hoarſe,
And marks with ruin it's portentous courſe.
" What mean theſe new alarms?" exclaim'd BLONDEL:
" Surely ſome Dæmons, ſtrangers to remorſe,
" And arm'd with all the potency of Hell,
" Ride in the troubled air, and frame their deadly ſpell!"

LXIX.

" Be they from Hell, or from our trait'rous foe,"
MAULEON cried, " it ſuits not us to ſtay:
" For paſt neglect a debt immenſe we owe,
" Which wounded honour calls on us to pay."
Thus ſaying, haſtily he led the way.
The Chieftains ſoon a croud tumultuous view'd,
Flying in wild diſorder and diſmay,
While a victorious hoſt their ſteps purſued,
And, hanging on their rear, their progreſs mark'd with blood.

LXX.

As when a farmer, fearful leſt ſome ſtorm
His promis'd hopes of harveſt may defeat,
Freſh reapers ſends his labour to perform,
And bids each band their portion'd taſk complete;
Beneath their ſickles bends the yellow wheat,
Strenuous they urge their toil, nor think of reſt
'Till in the centre of the field they meet:
So on the French their fierce purſuers preſs'd,
While ſtern MAULEON ſtrove their impulſe to arreſt.

LXXI.

Thro' their devoted maſs deſtruction reign'd,
On every quarter deſolation ſpread,
And ſanguin'd torrents the wide champaign ſtain'd,
When, proudly ſtriding over heaps of dead,
Hot with fatigue, his ſword with ſlaughter red,
RICHARD, advancing to MAULEON's band,
Exclaim'd, " Awhile ſuſpend your vengeance dread;
" Matters of greater import now demand
" Our inſtant vigilance, perhaps our ſuccouring hand.

LXXII.

" Too well th' events of this diſaſt'rous hour
" Our ſubtle foe's devices have declar'd.
" Say, has my Queen eſcap'd their ruthleſs pow'r?
" Have they my lovely BERENGARIA ſpar'd,
" Or while, oh agonizing thought! they dar'd
" Preſumptuouſly her palace to invade,
" Has ſhe the common lot of inſult ſhar'd?
" Oh! ſay, may yet avail her RICHARD's aid,
" Or has relentleſs fate my fondeſt hopes betray'd?"

LXXIII.

Thus ſaying, he awaited their reply.
The ſad reflexion which his words awoke
Drew from each pitying warrior's breaſt a ſigh;
As if afraid enquiry to provoke,
Confus'd they gaz'd around, but no one ſpoke,
When lo! half-breathleſs, and with action warm,
Thro' their cloſe ranks impatient AUDLEY broke;
" Comrades!" he cried, " for inſtant action arm!
" Fly to protect your Queen and ward th' impending harm!"

LXXIV.

Then, as the King he ſaw, who fix'd in grief
And panting from indignant feelings ſtood,
" PEMBROKE," aloud he cried, " implores relief!
" Well has he ſtemm'd the deſolating flood,
" And his good ſword, diſtain'd with Gallic blood,
" As yet has fruſtrated their baſe intent:
" But, as againſt their efforts oft renew'd
" Ill may ſuffice his troops with labour ſpent,
" Me to requeſt your aid the gallant Chief has ſent."

LXXV.

As when a tygreſs hears her young one's cries,
Whom from her den a band of hunters bears,
Rage fills her heart, with light'nings flaſh her eyes;
Purſuing quickly, preſent death ſhe dares,
She ruſhes 'midſt her foes, their limbs ſhe tears,
Reſiſtance goads her on to ſlaughters new,
And none her fury work'd to madneſs ſpares:
So fierce, ſo terrible, againſt the crew
Whoſe felon aim he learn'd imperial RICHARD flew.

LXXVI.

Still thro' the troubled air the tempeſt ſwell'd,
Still in dire chorus adverſe Dæmons ſcreech'd:
He unappall'd his way impetuous held.
Croſſing the camp, the tow'ring wood he reach'd,
Which round the palace deep-embow'ring ſtretch'd:
It's intermingling boughs, it's mantling ſhade,
It's moſſy trunks which time's ſlow hand had bleach'd,
Full often his bewilder'd ſteps betray'd;
Yet nought his purpoſe check'd, and nought his ardour [ſtay'd.

LXXVII.

Th' entangled path he reſolutely trac'd:
Tho' thorns and brambles oft oppos'd his way,
As if combin'd to mock his eager haſte,
By love and vengeance fir'd he ſpurn'd delay.
His comrades brave, their ardour to diſplay,
Strove thro' the gloomy brakes a path to force:
No perils could their wild impatience ſtay,
But, guided by the ſhouts and outcries hoarſe,
Now near and plainly heard, impell'd their vigorous courſe.

LXXVIII.

Their courage ſoon all obſtacles ſurpaſs'd;
Upon the plain which edg'd the wood they burſt,
And, as around their eager eyes they caſt,
Beheld on every ſide the guard diſpers'd,
And by the foe purſûed, whoſe bloody thirſt
Seem'd with increaſe of carnage to augment:
Still, as with murd'rous zeal and rage accurs'd
They urg'd their toil, beneath their faulchions bent
The Engliſh hoſt, and Heav'n with piercing ſhrieks was rent.

LXXIX.

New fury in each Chieftain's heart aroſe:
By common feelings and reſentment fir'd,
They ruſh'd reſiſtleſs on th' inſulting foes.
As if by more than human pow'rs inſpir'd,
They ſmote the traitors, who, by ſlaughter tir'd
More feebly the diſputed field maintain'd.
Now England's Chiefs atonement full requir'd,
Now, in it's turn, French gore the field diſtain'd,
Death o'er them ſhook his dart, and horror round them [reign'd.

LXXX.

While thus the fearful din of battle rag'd,
Superior cares and more diſtracting thought
The lab'ring breaſt of England's King engag'd.
Thro' the thick gloom which hell's enchantments wrought,
His eager glance the Norman Palace ſought.
Hid were it's turrets; thro' the veil of night
Scarcely his eye it's waving outline caught,
Tho' here and there, with coruſcation ſlight,
A torch was ſeen to glare and ſhed a partial light.

LXXXI.

But ſoon their bearers, iſſuing from the gate,
With ſudden glare the midnight gloom diſpell'd:
Loud ſhrieks were heard, and threats of hoſtile hate;
The chorus dread a ſtruggling female ſwell'd,
Whom in his graſp a ſturdy warrior held.
Regardleſs of her pray'rs and cries he ſeem'd,
And quickly from the wall his courſe impell'd,
While in the wind her floating treſſes ſtream'd,
And oft ſhe wrung her hands, and oft for ſuccour ſcream'd.

LXXXII.

As on the Knight their rays the torches ſhed,
RICHARD his cuiraſs and the helm deſcried
Adorn'd with coſtly gems which grac'd his head;
Where, mid the waving plumes with crimſon dyed,
Was ſeen a golden circlet, ſpreading wide
His princely ſtate and lineage to proclaim.
" And is it thus," indignantly he cried,
" Forgetful of his duty and his fame,
" A brother ſeeks to crown his oft-recorded ſhame?

LXXXIII.

" Shade of our Sire! thy recreant ſon behold!
" Sanction my vengeance on the wretch who ſpurn'd
" At honour's laws, ſeduc'd by Gallic gold?"
No more; for now his breaſt with fury burn'd,
The intermediate ranks he ſwift o'erturn'd,
And peopled Hell's domains with bleeding ſwarms,
When, on his right, he ſuddenly diſcern'd
A ſecond warrior, bearing in his arms
A captive fair, whoſe cries increas'd night's dread alarms.

LXXXIV.

He, deaf to pity, ſtill his courſe purſued,
Surrounded by a loud tumultuous band,
Whoſe taunts increas'd as ſhe her plaints renew'd,
All prompt to execute the dire command
Of him whoſe ſavage ſoul the deed had plann'd.
The warlike King his vig'rous progreſs check'd,
When thus ſhe cried: "Oh! where is RICHARD's hand
"His faithful BERENGARIA to protect!
"Juſt Heav'n! my hero's arm to ſave his love direct!"

LXXXV.

Deep fell her accents in his ſtricken ſoul:
As o'er his cheek a fluſh of paſſion paſs'd,
Forward he ruſh'd with rage which mock'd controul.
Not more the dread Simoom, with fatal blaſt
From Afric's ſandy plains approaching faſt,
Spreads deſolation, ruin and diſmay:
Th' inſulting miſcreants ſtood with fear aghaſt,
As thro' their crouded ranks he hew'd his way,
While round him drench'd in gore full many a Chieftain lay.

LXXXVI.

With his left hand he grip'd the warrior's throat
Who bore the Queen, and on his plumed creſt
With good Excalibor he rudely ſmote.
Nought could his weapon's temper'd edge arreſt:
It clove his head, and to his rugged breaſt
Paſs'd with reſiſtleſs impulſe, while a tide
Of guſhing blood diſtain'd his 'broider'd veſt.
He fell, but RICHARD caught his trembling bride,
And, as her fears he ſooth'd, exultingly thus cried.

LXXXVII.

" Courage, my love! the ruffian's hand no more
" Thy gentle nature ſhall prevail to harm;
" Here art thou ſafe: amid the tempeſt's roar,
" The cries of war, and battle's dread alarm,
" Propitious Heav'n to ſave thee led mine arm.
" Oh BERENGARIA! raiſe thy drooping head,
" Let thy dear voice thy conſtant RICHARD charm!"
She, ſtill o'ercome by recollections dread,
While tears her glowing cheeks bedew'd thus fondly ſaid.

LXXXVIII.

" Oh RICHARD! dearer to my woe-worn heart
" Than all that crowns or laviſh pomp can give,
" Do I then hold thee never more to part?
" While others, prompted by ambition, ſtrive
" Glory from war's rude conflicts to derive,
" My timid ſoul abhors their toil uncouth.
" Ah! why, when thus to tenderneſs alive,
" Should fate deny to BERENGARIA's truth
" Her firſt, her only wiſh, thy ſuff'ring breaſt to ſooth!"

LXXIX.

" Thy fond affection, love!" the King rejoin'd,
" By endleſs gratitude ſhall be repaid:
" But cares more earneſt now engage my mind.
" As hither I repair'd to bring thee aid,
" I ſaw a damſel, whom the foe convey'd
" From yonder walls; the torches dimly gleam'd
" Athwart the gloom, and ill her form diſplay'd;
" But, as their radiance on her viſage ſtream'd,
" Half by her treſſes hid, ſhe CHARICLÆA ſeem'd."

XC.

" 'Tis ſhe," replied the Queen; " at midnight hour,
" When in my chamber we repoſing lay,
" She fell a victim to remorſeleſs pow'r.
" Inſatiate ruffians, eager for their prey,
" Bore her when torn from my embrace away,
" While, ſtruggling, ſhe in vain for ſuccour cried,
" And ſtrove to move high Heav'n. Oh! who can ſay
" What mis'ries may my lovely friend betide,
" From thoſe whom licence wild and lawleſs paſſions guide!"

XCI.

As thus the weeping BERENGARIA ſpoke,
From ev'ry eye drops wrung by pity fell,
And rage in every manly breaſt awoke,
When, ruſhing forward, thus exclaim'd BLONDEL:
" Tho' arm'd with all the potency of Hell,
" Tho' fiends may guide them, and tho' dæmons ſhield,
" My vengeful ſword the traitors ſhall compel
" The prize their perfidy acquir'd to yield,
" Howe'er by force upheld, howe'er by fraud conceal'd.

XCII.

" My honeſt freedom, gracious King! forgive,
" When, in this preſence, I preſume to ſhew
" The ſecret of my heart. For her I live!
" For her I've breath'd th' irrevocable vow
" Of deathleſs truth! My humble ſuit allow!
" Let the great enterprize to me belong!
" Heav'n will my hand with tenfold force endow:
" Guided by love, urg'd by reſentment ſtrong,
" BLONDEL ſhall ſoon avenge his CHARICLÆA's wrong!"

XCIII.

" Thy boon be granted," cried the feeling Prince:
" No more the purpoſe of thy ſoul arreſt,
" But all thy gen'rous energies evince.
" May'ſt thou, ſucceſsful in thy daring queſt,
" Redeem the maid by trait'rous power oppreſs'd!
" May'ſt thou from harm her modeſt beauties guard!
" And, when th' event thy efforts ſhall have bleſs'd,
" May nought thy well-earn'd happineſs retard,
But may her virgin charms thy love and worth reward!"

XCIV.

He ſaid. BLONDEL's ſad heart with rapture ſwell'd,
But, ere he could reply, they PEMBROKE view'd,
Who by the arm a trembling captive held;
His helm and hauberk were diſtain'd with blood,
And from his pallid cheeks the vital flood
Was faſt receding. " As acroſs the plain,"
The Earl exclaim'd, " the traitors I purſued,
" Cloſely their ſteps I follow'd, but in vain,
" 'Till to the ſpot we came where winds the lordly Seine.

XCV.

" A bark we ſaw moor'd cloſely by the ſhore,
" To which, attended by his band, a Knight
" Graſp'd in his rude embrace a damſel bore.
" Surrounding darkneſs mock'd my eager ſight,
" Yet ſuch was CHARICLÆA's form and height,
" And ſuch the garb in which ſhe late appear'd.
" Her loud lament and ſhrieks of wild affright
" Struck to my ſoul, as they their anchor clear'd,
" And with a favouring breeze down the mid-current ſteer'd.

XCVI.

" In vain their progreſs we eſſay'd to check,
" For now along the ſtream they ſwiftly ſail'd,
" When their unworthy leader, from the deck,
" With boaſtful phraſe thus his purſuers hail'd:
' Tell your proud King, altho' his arms prevail'd
' To drive me from an almoſt vanquiſh'd realm,
' That now my bold endeavours have not fail'd:
' Let his lov'd minion's loſs his ſoul o'erwhelm,
' While vengeance crowns my toils, and love directs my [helm.'

XCVII.

" As thus he ſpake, far diſtant from the ſhore
" The force united of the wind and tide
" Beyond our ken th' inſulting Chieftain bore.
" Ranging along the ſtrand with ſlaughter dy'd,
" This wounded warrior 'mid the dead I ſpied:
" Haply, his knowledge of their foul intent,
" Hardly from him conceal'd, my King may guide
" To aſcertain what courſe the veſſel bent,
" And ere too late their plans atrocious to prevent."

XCVIII.

" Speak! or this weapon ſhall avenge her cauſe,"
BLONDEL exclaim'd as tow'rds the Chief he ſprung.
With interrupted voice, after a pauſe,
He thus began: " Ne'er ſhould thy threat'ning tongue
" Th' important ſecret from my breaſt have wrung:
" But thoughts of graver import now impreſs
" And urge my fleeting ſoul, by conſcience ſtung,
" The Prince's daring purpoſe to confeſs,
" And, far as words avail, my errors to redreſs.

XCIX.

" By that All-ſeeing Pow'r, before whoſe throne
" My diſembodied ſpirit ſoon muſt ſtand,
" Thus all I chanc'd to learn I truly own.
" To JOHN, who doubtleſs the deep ſcheme had plann'd,
" My royal maſter gave a bark well mann'd,
" In which he now directs his rapid courſe
" Tow'rds Fecan's walls, which o'er our northern ſtrand
" Sublimely tow'ring mock the billows hoarſe,
" By art and nature form'd to baffle human force.

C.

" There, when ſecurely ſhelter'd from his foes,
" 'Tis his intent to profit by his prize,
" And terms of high advantage to propoſe.
" He means the maid—But more my ſtrength denies—
" The hand of fate hangs heavy on mine eyes—
" My widow'd wife! my much-lov'd babes! adieu—
" Oh! may that Pow'r, whoſe foſt'ring care ſupplies—"
No more the Chieftain added; death's pale hue
O'erſpread his cheeks, his ſoul to Heav'n's tribunal flew.

CI.

" Too well," ſaid RICHARD, " has his tale declar'd,
" Tho' half untold remains, th' accurs'd deſign.
" Let a ſwift bark be inſtantly prepar'd!
" BLONDEL! th' important enterprize be thine;
" And let ſuch warriors, as may wiſh to join
" In brave redemption of the captive fair,
" With thee their zeal and gallantry combine:
" While we to Rouen and the camp repair,
" Leſt to renew th' aſſault our vengeful foe ſhould dare."

CII.

The Monarch ſaid, and with his Queen retir'd.
BLONDEL on high his ſanguin'd ſword diſplay'd,
And call'd his bold aſſociates; they, inſpir'd
With glory's flame, no heſitation made.
Fifty good Knights he choſe, in ſteel array'd,
Who erſt on Judah's ſhores with him had fought,
And offer'd now their voluntary aid.
The ready mariners with vigour wrought,
And ſoon the favouring breeze their ſpreading canvaſs caught.

END OF BOOK XIV.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

Council of the Engliſh---Mortimer leads a detachment to Martainville---Richard ſets out with part of his army to ſupport Blondel in his attack on Fecan---He arrives at the foreſt of Roumare---Machinations of the Dæmons, and temptation of Richard.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XV.

I.

WHILE on his daring queſt BLONDEL advanc'd,
RICHARD his Queen tow'rds Rouen's ramparts led.
As o'er the camp's wide ſtretch his eye he glanc'd,
Where horror yet her ſtern dominion ſpread,
His ſick'ning ſoul recoil'd, his colour fled,
And, wrung by pity, an unconſcious tear
For many a valiant comrade loſt he ſhed.
For war's effects moſt dreadful then appear,
When ceaſe her loud acclaims the mounting heart to cheer.

II.

There, wrapt in death, lay many a warrior bold:
Clos'd were thoſe eyes that once with ardour beam'd,
The heart that panted for renown was cold,
Cruſh'd was the brain which policy had ſchem'd,
And pale thoſe lips whence eloquence had ſtream'd.
The felon kite and many a carrion fowl
Hover'd around them, and obſcenely ſcream'd:
And from his foreſt haunts, with ſavage howl,
Scenting his feaſt of blood, the wolf was ſeen to prowl.

III.

" Theſe are thy triumphs, War!" exclaim'd the King:
" Oh! that ambition would awhile take breath,
" And ſcan the woes which from her fury ſpring!
" Ere yet the ſword of conqueſt ſhe unſheath,
" Let her behold the ravages of death,
" The varied pangs which her exceſſes cauſe,
" Her guilty triumphs, and her blood-ſtain'd wreath!
" Let her on theſe beſtow a thought, and pauſe
" Ere Heav'n ſhe loſe, to gain a ſervile world's applauſe."

IV.

Thus o'er th' enſanguin'd field, immers'd in woe,
He paſs'd, 'till to the royal tent he came.
He bad th' attendants on the dead beſtow
Such rites as ſuited their heroic name,
Such as were due to valour and to fame.
With pious care his mandate they obey'd:
Throughout the camp aroſe their ſad acclaim,
As the laſt tribute of regard they paid,
And on each Chieftain's tomb his uſeleſs arms diſplay'd.

V.

Soon as was thus fulfill'd the mournful rite,
And o'er the warriors ſlain was rear'd the mound,
The King ſent forth his heralds to invite
The Peers to council. At the trumpet's ſound,
With haſten'd ſteps o'er the yet-reeking ground
Obedient to their Monarch's will they preſs'd.
In mute attention as they ſtood around,
With expectation fill'd each gallant breaſt,
He thus in meaſur'd terms th' aſſembly grave addreſs'd.

VI.

" 'Tis not, my friends! of errors paſt to treat,
" 'Tis not on your miſconduct to dilate,
" Tho' dire th' effect, I ſummon you to meet.
" Our recent loſs ſhould vigilance create,
" And urge us, when aſſembled in debate,
" Such means of future enterprize to frame,
" As may be beſt adapted to our ſtate,
" And may moſt ſpeedily redeem our ſhame,
" And reſcue from reproach our once-unſullied fame.

VII.

" Your manly ſpirits will not deem it fit,
" The vigour of our warriors to reſtrain,
" Or to repeated inſults to ſubmit.
" More worthy objects led us 'croſs the main;
" A brave and ſuff'ring province to ſuſtain,
" A great revenge for broken faith to wreak,
" Redreſs and full indemnity to gain,
" And by exertions new renown to ſeek,
" We ſwore; nor let us now our vow recorded break.

VIII.

" To the diſcloſure of my plan attend.
" BLONDEL and his aſſociates bold to ſave,
" It well behoves us inſtant aid to lend.
" Where Fecan's tow'rs the ocean's fury brave,
" And proudly mock the vainly-threat'ning wave,
" Perils beyond the lot of war they dare.
" Their gallant efforts firſt attention crave:
" Be it our glory, our peculiar care,
" Their ſafety to inſure, their worthy toils to ſhare.

IX.

" This taſk be mine: for, tho' he faithleſs prove,
" Yet, on a Brother's faults when I reflect,
" The fond remembrances of former love
" Ruſh on my ſoul, and plead for his defect.
" In him my Father's mem'ry I reſpect:
" Tho' groſs his crime, and heinous be his guilt,
" A ſubject's hand muſt not his fault correct;
" The blood from Him deriv'd muſt not be ſpilt,
" Nor muſt my wiſh'd ſucceſs on fratricide be built.

X.

" While thus tow'rds Fecan I conduct my might,
" Let MORTIMER from Rouvrai paſs the Seine,
" And, marching under cover of the night,
" Attempt the heights near Martainville to gain,
" There by his preſence PHILIP to reſtrain,
" And keep him from attending to my courſe.
" Meantime, my Queen in Rouen ſhall remain,
" Where, till in triumph ends our brief divorce,
" LEICESTER ſhall guard her ſafe from Gallia's lawleſs [force."

XI.

The Chiefs approv'd as thus the Monarch ſpoke;
Each hop'd a portion of his toils to ſhare,
And expectation in each breaſt awoke.
To Rouen's walls, with BERENGARIA fair,
Imperial RICHARD haſten'd to repair:
Her to the charge of LEICESTER's Earl he gave;
While ſhe, oppreſs'd with agonizing care,
Breath'd many a vow Heav'n's ſov'reign aid to crave,
And many a ſaint implor'd her hero's life to ſave.

XII.

Now from his arch ſublime the lamp of day
Tow'rds his Atlantic couch deſcended faſt;
Athwart th' empurpled clouds his chaſten'd ray,
Emblem of mild beneficence, he caſt,
And, as his ſplendour gilt th' horizon vaſt,
By grateful nature hail'd he ſank to reſt.
Throughout the camp the mingling warriors paſs'd,
And, as preparing for their vent'rous queſt,
Each to his leader's poſt with gen'rous ardour preſs'd.

XIII.

Nor were their efforts vain. Soon as the night
Her ſable mantle o'er the earth had ſpread,
Bold MORTIMER, advancing on the right,
Acroſs the Seine his firm battalions led.
The full-orb'd moon her temper'd radiance ſhed
To guide their way: they paſs'd Belbœuf, Montmain,
And Annebaud, where high it's branching head
Her foreſt rear'd, and, ſkirting Beaulieu's plain,
They march'd their deſtin'd poſt of Martainville to gain.

XIV.

The warlike King meantime arrang'd his hoſt,
And, where the river to the ſouth inclin'd,
In cloſe array it's ample ſtream they croſs'd.
High wav'd the knightly banners in the wind,
And ev'ry Chieftain, at his poſt aſſign'd,
Seem'd emulous the common toil to ſhare.
The walls of Montigny they left behind,
And, as the dawn firſt glimmer'd in the air,
Thro' the aſcending miſt they ſaw La Vaupalliere.

XV.

The ſun in clouds aroſe, as if averſe
To ſhew the country's deſolate aſpect.
Far round was ſeen of ruthleſs war the curſe:
The fields no more with golden grain were deck'd,
No more, his flock at day-break to collect,
The ſhepherd's pipe re-echo'd from the hill;
The cottages ſeem'd mould'ring from neglect;
All was abandon'd, ruinous and ſtill,
Save when the gaunt wolf howl'd, or ſcream'd the owlet [ſhrill.

XVI.

Here, in ſome hut, whoſe half-burnt roof yet ſmoak'd,
It's narrow door-way reeking yet with blood,
The care-worn peaſant ſat and Heav'n invok'd,
Frantic, and gazing on his infant brood,
With unavailing cries imploring food,
And calling yet upon their mother's name:
She heard not their lament; the ſoldier rude,
Deaf to compaſſion's voice, her ſtrength o'ercame,
And bore her far away t'appeaſe his brutal flame.

XVII.

There, wildly wand'ring o'er the deſert plain,
Some weeping matron ſought her lov'd child's corſe,
With outcries loud and exclamations vain:
Or ſome ſad widow mourn'd her ſoul's divorce;
While, as dread tales they told of lawleſs force,
Full many a maiden, trembling and forlorn,
Of their regretted ſwains would hold diſcourſe,
Whom war remorſeleſs from their arms had borne,
And from their native ſhades and plighted vows had torn.

XVIII.

The pitying King, partaking in their grief,
Thoſe ills, which human aid could reach, conſol'd.
But what to mental woe can bring relief?
The pangs of nature cannot be controul'd;
Nor pow'r's ſtrong hand, nor all prevailing gold,
The poiſon rankling in the heart can ſheath:
Still ſenſibility paſt ſcenes will mould,
Where joy and fleeting pleaſure wove their wreath,
When yet unknown was care, unfelt the ſting of death.

XIX.

While RICHARD thus his painful march purſued,
From their exalted ſeat th' Infernal Pair
With double vengeance fir'd his progreſs view'd.
" Is it for this, that with unceaſing care,"
SATAN exclaim'd, " my engines I prepare?
" Shall a weak mortal thus my plans defeat?
" Has Hell no new devices to enſnare,
" No potent ſtratagems, no ſtrong deceit,
" Which may ſubdue his ſoul, and my revenge complete?

XX.

" BELIAL! the cauſe of France and PHILIP's fate,
" Again at ſtake, our inſtant aid require.
" Call forth thy utmoſt pow'rs: indulge thy hate:
" Combine with me in RICHARD's ſoul t'inſpire
" The ſtrong allurements of unchaſte deſire:
" Goad him to luſt and to unlicenc'd love:
" Let him, the victim of unhallow'd fire,
" To virtue loſt, thro' pleaſure's mazes rove,
" Till angels weep his fall, and Hell triumphant prove!"

XXI.

Thus ſaying, thro' the air his wings he ſpread,
And trac'd his baleful flight: him follow'd near
BELIAL, not leſs intent on errand dread.
Far 'neath them flow'd Rapaume, whoſe waters clear
A grateful tribute to Seine's current bear:
Skirting it's lake's green marge Maromme they ſaw,
And Roumare's far-extended foreſt, where
ROLLO made known the terrors of his law,
And fill'd the ſavage tribes with reverential awe.

XXII.

Thither the Fiends their vengeful progreſs bent.
Swift as the ſolar ray the void they paſs'd,
And o'er the far-ſpread ſhade with dire intent
Their flight arreſted. Thro' it's coverts vaſt
SATAN with joy malign his keen glance caſt:
" Here, where yon glade the mingling boughs o'er-arch,"
He cried, " my pow'r ſhall RICHARD's glories blaſt:
" Let heat oppreſs, let thirſt his legions parch,
" And force him to ſuſpend awhile his toilſome march."

XXIII.

He ſaid, and thrice he wav'd his hand on high.
Forthwith the ſouth with murky clouds was bound,
Which, rapidly aſcending thro' the ſky,
The wide meridian with their veil embrown'd.
Thunders at diſtance broke with ſullen ſound,
And, as if forc'd by ſympathetic ſway,
With ſhort and quick concuſſions ſhook the ground:
The ſun obſcur'd no longer ſhot his ray;
All nature ſeem'd convuls'd and torpid with diſmay.

XXIV.

As o'er the plain advanc'd the Engliſh hoſt,
Appall'd the ſtrange tranſition they beheld,
And gaz'd upon the ſcene in wonder loſt.
When, lo! around them hollow murmurs ſwell'd:
A vapour denſe and hot, with ſpeed unquell'd
And pois'nous range, acroſs the champaign came.
As rolling on it's baleful courſe it held,
The plants and herbage dry and black became,
Crackling beneath their feet as if conſum'd by flame.

XXV.

As from a furnace the ignited ſteam
Burſts, ſo infernal influence to diſpenſe
Amid their ranks ruſh'd on the noxious ſtream.
Againſt it's ſubtlety and pow'r intenſe
Nor helm nor cuiraſs could afford defence:
The ſpring elaſtic of the air was fled;
That active principle, that lively ſenſe,
By Providence o'er all creation ſpread
For wond'rous purpoſes, now ſeem'd effete and dead.

XXVI.

The warriors bow'd beneath its pow'r accurs'd;
Fainting they ſtagger'd, while from ev'ry pore
Unnat'ral floods of perſpiration burſt:
Their fibres, ſuddenly relax'd, no more
Th' o'erwhelming burthen of their armour bore.
Nor leſs their minds ſubdued the vapour dank:
Each viſage marks of ſtrong dejection wore;
No longer now obſervant of their rank,
They wander'd o'er the plain, or on the ſcorch'd turf ſank.

XXVII.

Nor leſs the King annoy'd the noxious blaſt:
But native courage him with force ſupplied;
Throughout the hoſt he reſolutely paſs'd,
And, as to raiſe their drooping hearts he tried,
He pointed out to them the covert wide,
Where ſhelter and freſh riv'lets they might find.
Some were to action rous'd; while others ſigh'd,
And liſtleſsly upon the ground reclin'd,
As if to reaſon deaf, or to their fate reſign'd.

XXVIII.

His arguments, oft urg'd, prevail'd at length:
T'advance with languid efforts they eſſay'd,
Tho' for exertion ſcarce ſuffic'd their ſtrength.
As the deep wood more nearly they ſurvey'd,
It ſeem'd as if, amid th' impervious ſhade,
Zephyr the undulating branches caught,
And with their gently-waving foliage play'd;
Now, ſoftly ſwelling, to their ſenſe he brought
Short, interrupted gales, with ſweets reviving fraught.

XXIX.

Their faculties the balmy coolneſs cheer'd,
And gave them force their efforts to renew.
The friendly foreſt ſoon at hand appear'd:
More freely now the breeze inſpiring blew,
And, as o'er flow'rets deck'd with many a hue
It ſwept, their mingling fragrancy it ſtole,
And from their honied cups rich odours drew,
Of pow'r the venom'd influence to controul,
Which in dominion ſtrange had bound each warrior's ſoul.

XXX.

" Hither, my lov'd companions!" RICHARD cried,
" Beneath theſe friendly oaks, whoſe boughs diſcloſe
" An ample canopy, and, circling wide
" Their moſs-grown arms, invite you to repoſe,
" Awhile the mem'ry of your ſuff'rings loſe.
" Here, to recruit your waſted ſtrength, remain,
" While yet the air with heat portentous glows:
" Perhaps, when beams the ev'ning ſtar, again
" Your limbs from toil refreſh'd new travel may ſuſtain."

XXXI.

The warriors, as their Monarch ſpake, in haſte
Ent'ring the wood, each avenue around
And ev'ry path in ſearch of water trac'd.
Ere long, attracted by its murm'ring ſound,
With verdant hart's-tongue fring'd a ſtream they found:
Stretch'd on its banks they drank potations deep;
Then, as their helms and morions they unbound,
Some their proviſions ſpread, while ſome in ſleep,
More grateful from fatigue, their ſenſes ſought to ſteep.

XXXII.

While thus, as chance preſcrib'd, at eaſe they lay,
RICHARD, whoſe ſpirit dull inaction ſlighted,
Amid the wood's receſs preferr'd to ſtray.
It's varied charms his raptur'd eye invited;
The gently-quiv'ring leaves and boughs were lighted
By the gay ſun-beam; while the maſs between,
A ſtranger to it's ray, ſeem'd half-benighted;
Yet, as the breeze prevail'd, throughout were ſeen
In rich gradation tints of vivid brown and green.

XXXIII.

With flow'rs enamell'd, and with moſs beſprent,
Unnumber'd paths, which nature's hand had clear'd,
On ev'ry ſide their courſe romantic bent,
O'ercanopied with oaks, whoſe trunks high-rear'd
The produce huge of centuries appear'd,
With miſletoe and hoary lichens hung:
While, as their flight with ſportive wings they ſteer'd,
Thouſands of birds their am'rous deſcants ſung,
'Till with their lively ſtrains the foreſt's circuit rung.

XXXIV.

RICHARD delighted view'd the placid ſcene:
Congenial calmneſs o'er his boſom ſtole;
A ſudden influence, potent tho' ſerene,
Prevail'd his warring paſſions to controul,
And harmonize inſenſibly his ſoul.
With careleſs pace he wander'd 'mid the ſhade,
A path purſuing, which acroſs a knoll
Seem'd to conduct him tow'rds a verdant glade,
By the ſurrounding gloom more gay and tempting made.

XXXV.

As on he went, beauties, before unknown,
Combin'd his raptur'd ſenſes to ſurprize.
O'er the ſmooth turf, irregularly thrown,
Fantaſtic beeches of enormous ſize,
Forming a circle vaſt, were ſeen to riſe:
Each, as it rear'd aloft it's ample head,
Ting'd with brown Autumn's richly-pencil'd dyes,
On ev'ry ſide it's maſſy branches ſpread,
And o'er the vault immenſe a ſolemn ſtillneſs ſhed.

XXXVI.

Beneath their high-thrown arch more freely grew
The variegated ſtore, which nature gay
Around with elegant luxuriance threw,
As if intent her treaſures to array:
While, as the flitting gale in wanton play
Swept o'er their waving tops, the ſun illum'd
The modeſt lawn, and glanc'd his golden ray:
Then new-born fragrancy the air perfum'd,
More freſh the herbage ſprang, more ſweet the flow'rets [bloom'd.

XXXVII.

Cloſe by them flow'd a ſoftly-murm'ring brook,
Where, 'mid the current which tranſlucent roll'd,
It's ſcaly brood their harmleſs paſtime took.
There the ſwift-gliding trout rejoic'd t'unfold
His bright red circlets and his ſcales of gold;
The perch his ſcarlet fins and ſilv'ry ſide
Diſclos'd, while, with dominion uncontroul'd,
The lordly pike, dread monarch of the tide,
O'er ſubject tribes was ſeen unrivall'd to preſide.

XXXVIII.

There water-lilies their ſweet odour ſpread,
And, from it's ſword-like leaves of brighteſt green,
The gaudy iris rear'd it's yellow head.
Skirting each bank, the poplar tall was ſeen,
Alders, and willows, which prefer to lean,
And kiſs the waves which round their moiſt roots wind.
To perfect the enchantments of the ſcene,
The roſe and eglantine their ſcents combin'd,
And high it's graceful wreaths the clematis entwin'd.

XXXIX.

" Oh nature! faireſt in retirement ſhewn,"
He cried, " when thus, by grandeur unoppreſs'd,
" I view thy charms, and hail them all thine own,
" When thy chaſte lovelineſs is thus confeſs'd,
" To Heav'n my ſoul aſcends, my conſcious breaſt
" With rev'rence tow'rds the Pow'r tranſcendent glows,
" Whoſe hand with beauties has creation dreſs'd,
" Whoſe bounty in a ſtream exhauſtleſs flows
" On all that walk the earth, on ev'ry flow'r that blows.

XL.

" Here, amid ſhades conceal'd from mortal eye,
" While round me breezes charg'd with perfumes ſweep,
" And birds their ſweet ſtrains carol, let me lie.
" I feel a ſoft and gentle influence creep
" O'er my exhauſted frame. Come, balmy Sleep!
" Whom oft in vain the care-worn monarch ſues,
" My languid ſenſes in oblivion ſteep.
" Let me my toils awhile in ſlumber loſe,
" Nor to my wearied ſoul thy genial aid refuſe."

XLI.

Gently he ſank, and, on th' enamell'd ground
Out-ſtretch'd, he loſt the mem'ry of his care:
For more than natural ſway his forces bound.
Him over-ſhadowing, the infuriate pair
Survey'd malignly, as they wrought their ſnare,
The laſt dread effort of their vengeance fell.
Charg'd with contagion was the troubled air,
Now ſaturated by the potent ſpell,
Devis'd by ruthleſs pow'r, and cull'd from deepeſt Hell.

XLII.

" The hour approaches," SATAN ſternly cried,
" When his o'erthrow, who long has ſpurn'd our ſway,
" Our conteſt and our triumph ſhall decide.
" Summon the ſpirits who our word obey;
" With them thy practis'd artifice diſplay,
" Temptations ſtrong and novel to produce,
" Which may our victim's conſtancy betray;
" While in his ſoul ſtrange poiſons I infuſe,
" His fancy to inflame, his ſenſes to abuſe."

XLIII.

BELIAL exulting heard his dire command:
With ſavage joy and helliſh tranſport fraught,
From their ſulphureous caves he call'd his band.
Him with obedient wing the Dæmons ſought;
Aw'd by his word, by his example taught,
They urg'd the duties which their Chief impos'd,
And to compleat the charm of miſchief wrought;
While RICHARD, ſtill his eyes in ſlumber clos'd,
Unconſcious of their arts and plans malign, repos'd.

XLIV.

As when a Vampyre, hot for human blood,
Pierces with ſharpen'd tongue the turgid vein
Of ſome deep-ſleeping wretch, the vital flood
With ſuction ſtrong he perſeveres to drain,
And o'er him, to obtund the ſenſe of pain,
Unceaſingly his leathern pinions plies;
Doom'd ne'er to view the light of Heav'n again,
His victim more and more exhauſted lies,
Dreams out his ebbing life, and unreſiſting dies:

XLV.

So his broad wings the Prince of Darkneſs ſpread
O'er England's King, but with intent more foul:
He ſought not only by enchantments dread
And ſpells accurs'd his body to controul,
But to ſubdue and brutalize his ſoul,
And blaſt his glories with eternal ſhame.
As wav'd his plumes, his potent influence ſtole
Like fire electric thro' the Monarch's frame,
And to his heart propell'd a penetrating flame.

XLVI.

Soon the contagion to prevail began:
For now, the poiſons, which the Fiend infus'd,
With force reſiſtleſs thro' his arteries ran.
Viſions, whoſe airy forms the ſoul abus'd,
Like thoſe by fever's madd'ning heat produc'd,
In quick ſucceſſion ſkimm'd acroſs his brain,
And with diſplay fantaſtical amus'd:
Spectres of ſhape uncouth, chimæras vain,
Now breathing fond delight, and now foreboding pain.

XLVII.

But as, when morning re-aſſumes her ſway,
The mantling fog, engender'd by the night,
Before the ſun's new ſplendour fades away,
Down from the mountains roll it's volumes white,
And the gay vallies, now reſtor'd to light,
Their dew-dropt meads and foliage rich diſcloſe;
So fled theſe phantaſms from his mental ſight,
And ſcenes more definitely trac'd aroſe,
On his deluded ſenſe adapted to impoſe.

XLVIII.

It's ample walls a ſtately palace rear'd,
Whoſe columns huge, rang'd in confuſion bold,
And from Carrara's boaſted quarries clear'd,
With ſhafts majeſtic roſe the roof t' uphold,
Which, trimly fretted, and adorn'd with gold,
Spread to the day, and with it's radiance beam'd.
It's windows arching high, of Gothic mould,
Fantaſtically deck'd with paintings ſeem'd,
Stain'd with whoſe magic dyes the light attemper'd ſtream'd.

XLIX.

As o'er the vaulted hall it's gay tints burſt,
Freſh brilliancy from ſparkling gems they drew,
Which o'er the ſpacious chamber were diſpers'd:
The purple amethyſt, the ſapphire blue,
The blood-red ruby, opals ever new,
The yellow topaz, and the emerald green,
Pale beryls, hyacinths of fiery hue,
The diamond of the mineral kingdom queen,
All in profuſion heap'd and ſplendid pomp were ſeen.

L.

On either ſide, and at the upper end,
In long array diſpos'd, were tables plac'd,
With varied luxuries that appear'd to bend.
There ev'ry tempting viand might be trac'd,
To rouſe dull appetite and charm the taſte:
Pomona there her luſcious produce ſtrew'd,
There Flora with her gifts the banquet grac'd,
While from vaſt tuns the juice of Bacchus flow'd,
And perfumes rich exhal'd as in the cup it glow'd.

LI.

On couches rich, along the ſpacious board,
Sat many a lovely dame and luſty knight,
Carouſing on the cates which there were ſtor'd:
Theſe their fair partners earneſt ſeem'd t' invite,
Their amorous ſuit and ſervice to requite
With full poſſeſſion of their blooming charms;
While ſmiling they appear'd their vows to ſlight,
Yet oft, t' appeaſe their idly rais'd alarms,
Forgot their coyneſs feign'd, and ſank into their arms.

LII.

Minſtrels unſeen enchanting notes awoke,
And from their harps, with chords of ſilver ſtrung,
Sounds which might apathy itſelf provoke,
In wild and mingled modulation wrung.
Suſpended now the melting cadence hung,
Now, burſting into diapaſon ſweet,
The vault with harmonies ecſtatic rung,
While heav'nly voices would the ſong repeat,
And ſwell their rapt'rous ſtrains the chorus to compleat.

LIII.

Now livelier ſymphonies were heard around.
A group of wanton nymphs was ſeen advancing:
Light as the air they bounded o'er the ground,
By half concealment now their charms enhancing,
Now thro' their bluſhes ſmiles inſidious glancing,
Which ſpoke impaſſion'd heat and fierce deſire;
Then beams voluptuous from their full eyes lancing,
Their poliſh'd limbs entwining, to inſpire
Viſions of mad delight and dreams of luſtful fire.

LIV.

RICHARD inflam'd the tempting ſcene beheld,
For reaſon now her ſway no longer kept;
High beat his pulſe, his veins with tranſport ſwell'd,
And o'er his heart a flood of paſſion ſwept.
Tow'rds the gay throng impatiently he leap'd,
When, lo! the Nymph, who ſeem'd to lead the reſt,
Beaming angelic beauties, forward ſtept:
She gaz'd, ſhe bluſh'd, and, while her eyes confeſs'd
Ecſtatic joy, ſhe caught the Monarch to her breaſt.

LV.

Her touch his ſoul with kindred ardour fill'd,
Through all his frame the ſubtle influence flew,
And ev'ry nerve with madd'ning fury thrill'd.
As round her yielding form his arms he threw,
Charms unexpected met his eager view:
With drifted ſnow her ſkin appear'd to vie,
Her panting boſom heav'd with impulſe new,
With double luſtre ſhone her moiſten'd eye,
And all Arabia's ſweets were wafted in a ſigh.

LVI.

Entranc'd he ſeem'd amidſt a world of bliſſes;
Cloſer he held her in his warm embrace,
And raviſh'd from her lips ambroſial kiſſes:
Now, bolder grown, his eye eſſay'd to trace
Her ſoft form modell'd by the touch of grace,
Which ſcarcely her tranſparent veſtment hid;
While ſhe, with glowing and averted face,
In broken accents his preſumption chid,
Yet ſeem'd diſpos'd to ſhare what ſtill her tongue forbid.

LVII.

Sudden ſhe burſt from his encircling arms,
And, while a ſmile which might recal the dead
Play'd on her mouth and heighten'd all her charms,
She left the group, who with fantaſtic tread
Unwearied yet their wanton meaſures led,
And down the hall her agile footſteps bent.
He follow'd as the fair enchantreſs fled,
Who, turning oft, impaſſion'd glances ſent,
Expreſſive of her flame, and mutely eloquent.

LVIII.

Not the light goſſamer more ſwiftly ſkims
Thro' yielding æther when the freſh breeze blows,
Than mov'd the fair one: from her poliſh'd limbs,
As if ſucceſſive beauties to diſcloſe,
Caught by the gale her looſe robe oft aroſe,
And widely ſpread, as if it ſcorn'd to ſhield
Charms which might well on mortal ſenſe impoſe:
Theſe as with practis'd coyneſs ſhe conceal'd,
Treaſures more tempting ſtill her erring hand reveal'd.

LIX.

Thro' the expanding portals now ſhe flew,
And 'croſs a path with ſofteſt moſs array'd
Nimbly advanc'd, 'till tow'rds a wood ſhe drew,
Where, as they form'd a deep impervious ſhade,
The foreſt's tenants far their boughs diſplay'd;
While, 'mid their knotty trunks with ivy deck'd,
With varied courſe branch'd off full many a glade,
Some their ſtraight courſe preferring to direct,
Some tempting the pleas'd eye their wand'rings to inſpect.

LX.

She heſitated not, but chuſing one
Which far within the wood appear'd to wind,
Gaily tripp'd on; yet ſeem'd ſhe not to ſhun
The ardent King, who follow'd cloſe behind:
Oft look'd ſhe back with ſmiles, as if inclin'd,
Within the dark receſſes of the grove,
Some covert from intruſion free to find,
Which to warm paſſion might auſpicious prove,
And where congenial hearts might ſacrifice to love.

LXI.

Nor ſought ſhe long in vain. Of pureſt green
A turfy couch appear'd, with flow'rets ſtrew'd,
O'er which, high arching, beeches tall were ſeen;
As mantling thick their waving branches ſhew'd,
With the ſun's mild departing tints they glow'd:
Near them, meand'ring o'er it's pebbly bed,
And gently murm'ring, a clear riv'let flow'd;
Melodious birds in amorous circles ſped,
And o'er th' enchanting ſcene contagious ſoftneſs ſhed.

LXII.

RICHARD amaz'd the well-known ſpot beheld,
Where lately, ſpent by toil, he courted reſt:
But other objects his fond ſoul impell'd:
The tempting fair one who inflam'd his breaſt
Now vanquiſh'd ſeem'd; by laſſitude oppreſs'd,
Sinking to earth, her ſwift career ſhe ſtay'd;
Panting ſhe lay; with her diſorder'd veſt
As if enamour'd Zephyr looſely play'd,
While beauties yet unſeen his wanton touch betray'd.

LXIII.

" She's mine! She's mine!" th'enraptur'd monarch cried,
And, while his heart beat high with new alarms,
He knelt o'ercome with tranſport by her ſide,
And, as he fondly preſs'd her in his arms,
Confeſs'd the full dominion of her charms.
She with feign'd coyneſs, as his ſuit advanc'd,
Seem'd faintly deprecating fancied harms;
Bluſhes and tears her lovelineſs enhanc'd,
'Till trembling on the ſod ſhe fell as if entranc'd.

LXIV.

Meantime, while SATAN thus his purpoſe dread
With perſevering energy had wrought,
And o'er his victim's ſoul his toils had ſpread,
His active miniſters, by BELIAL taught,
Their ſubtle ſpell had to perfection brought.
" Behold!" he cried, " o'er his ſubjected frame
" Our arts prevail: be now the moment caught,
" When in his waking heart th' unhallow'd flame
" May reign with fatal power, and eternize his ſhame."

LXV.

As when, engender'd by the falling dew,
The gaudy rainbow o'er heav'n's face aſcends,
In quick ſucceſſion, purple, violet, blue,
Green, yellow, orange, red, it gaily blends;
Diſtinctly each a ſeparate arch extends,
Yet, ſo combin'd their outlines, none can tell
Where one begins, and where another ends:
So, imperceptibly, the potent ſpell
Prevail'd from RICHARD's ſenſe ſleep's empire to diſpel.

LXVI.

Unconſcious of the rapid change he ſeem'd;
With inſtantaneous energy his ſoul
From ſupernat'ral ſlumber was redeem'd:
Yet did the Fiend his faculties controul
With ſuch ſtrange ſway, that the tranſition ſtole
Unheeded and unfelt; the viſion ran
Into his waking thoughts, and form'd a whole
So juſt, that recollection fail'd to ſcan
Where fiction ceas'd, or where reality began.

LXVII.

The ſame in ev'ry point appear'd the ſcene:
Still, in attractive lovelineſs array'd,
The turf and verdant canopy were ſeen;
Still, as it darted thro' the mantling ſhade,
The ſun's mild luſtre with the foliage play'd;
Still flow'd the riv'let; ſtill the ſweet birds ſung;
Still by his ſide the fainting Nymph was laid;
Still gaz'd he on her charms, and on his tongue
Unfiniſh'd ecſtacies and vows of tranſport hung.

LXVIII.

The ready Nymph the favouring moment took:
Op'ning her eyes which paſſion ſtrong confeſs'd,
While her ſoft frame with agitation ſhook,
She caught him in her arms, and cloſely preſs'd
Th' enamour'd Monarch to her panting breaſt.
" Victor alike," ſhe cried, " in war and love,
" Nought ſhould thy promis'd triumph now arreſt,
" Would'ſt thou but one fond, tender, doubt remove.
" Wilt thou be truly mine? Ah! wilt thou conſtant prove?"

LXIX.

" Treat not ſo lightly thy reſiſtleſs charms,"
Replied he; " pleaſure dances in thine eye,
" And Paradiſe is centred in thine arms!
" Increaſe of joy poſſeſſion will ſupply;
" Our vig'rous love ſhall time itſelf defy,
" And freſh attractions ſhall inhance our bliſs!
" Then, matchleſs Nymph! no more my ſuit deny!
" Thus I adjure thee by this burning kiſs
" To crown my ardent hopes, and all thy fears diſmiſs!"

LXX.

She, while deep bluſhes mantled on her cheek,
And heav'd with wild delight her boſom fair,
As if unable for a while to ſpeak,
Gaz'd on him: then with an impaſſion'd air
She cried, " Thus let me my reſolve declare:
" Tell me but once that thou art wholly mine,
" That none with me thy conſtant heart ſhall ſhare;
" To ev'ry other love thy faith reſign,
" Then I and all my charms ſhall be for ever thine."

LXXI.

A ſtrange emotion o'er his boſom paſs'd.
The Nymph, who fail'd not it's acceſs to trace,
Again her ſnow-white arms around him caſt,
And, ſummoning each ſmile and winning grace,
With new endearments in her warm embrace
Him, half reluctant, half o'ercome, ſhe held.
Ungovern'd tranſport now illum'd her face,
Beam'd in her eyes, high in her boſom ſwell'd,
And thro' her trembling frame the quicken'd blood impell'd.

LXXII.

" Now," ſhe exclaim'd, " when all to love invites,
" When none with eye prophane preſume t'invade
" This ſhelter conſecrated to delights,
" Say why, my hero! are our joys delay'd?
" Mark how the ſportive ſongſters of the glade
" Nature's bleſt law with ecſtaſy purſue:
" By them her firſt, beſt, mandate is obey'd;
" Fruition ſtill unſated they renew,
" As if increas'd deſires from full enjoyment grew.

LXXIII.

" See, how thro' all creation's ample verge,
" On earth's green face, 'midſt ocean's depths profound,
" All feel the impulſe, all the duty urge.
" By this kind nature's great beheſt is crown'd:
" Earth, water, air, with tenderneſs reſound;
" The tow'ring woods, the widely-arching groves,
" Each gaudy flow'ret that adorns the ground,
" Confeſs her ſway; each bliſs appropriate proves,
" And ſhedding perfumes breathes it's aromatic loves.

LXXIV.

" Why then ſhould we our happineſs retard,
" Since, of ſuperior faculties poſſeſs'd,
" More perfect joys our paſſion will reward?
" Thus let me hold thee to my throbbing breaſt!
" Thus let my vows be on thy lips confeſs'd!
" Thus, while our ſouls in mingling tranſports join,
" With burning ſighs pronounce the valued teſt;
" Tell me but once all others you reſign,
" Swear that yourſelf, your ſoul, ſhall be for ever mine!"

LXXV.

" Myſelf! my ſoul!" the King confus'd replied,
" This and it's inmoſt thoughts to Heav'n belong,
" That claims excluſively my lovely bride.
" I may not both at once ſo foully wrong!
" Mov'd by ſome potency, unknown tho' ſtrong,
" Have ſtoop'd my captive ſenſes to thy lure.
" Strange and confus'd ideas o'er me throng:
" Sure Hell itſelf, my paſſions to allure,
" O'er my unguarded ſoul has ſpread it's charms impure!"

LXXVI.

" And doſt thou then my proffer'd love diſdain?"
Exclaim'd the Nymph: " Is my poor feeling heart
" On apathy like thine beſtow'd in vain?
" Ah! let me to ſome ſhade remote depart,
" Rack'd by deſpair, and tortur'd by the ſmart
" Of ſcorn'd endearments and of ſlighted charms!
" What! at a pledge of conſtancy to ſtart,
" When fond deſire thy youthful boſom warms,
" When willing beauty ſues, and claſps thee in her arms!"

LXXVII.

" Ah ceaſe!" he cried, "fond Nymph! the heart t'upbraid,
" Which thy fair image too diſtinctly bears:
" The cloud, which darkly o'er my fancy play'd,
" Whate'er th' illuſion may have caus'd, now clears,
" And, tho' with range uncertain, doubts and fears
" Contend for empire and diſtract my mind.
" Ah! look not ſo! drop not thoſe pearly tears
" Hide thoſe perfections, leſt, to duty blind,
" Again my working ſoul to madneſs be reſign'd!"

LXXVIII.

" Alas! how can I tears of anguiſh hide!
" Can I, when breaks my throbbing heart with pain,
" Command my ſmiles?" ſhe tenderly replied.
" Bid angry ocean his wild waves reſtrain,
" Bid joy the minutes of delight retain,
" Or grief annihilate the gloomy hour,
" But bid not me felicity regain!
" Conſuming flames my ſuff'ring breaſt devour,
" I die the ſlave of love, of thy unpitying pow'r!"

LXXIX.

She ſaid, and fainting ſank: his fervent ſoul
Deſire and opportunity impell'd,
And o'er his ſenſe again wild paſſion ſtole:
Embrac'd the yielding fair one yet he held,
Still fluſh'd her cheeks, her panting boſom ſwell'd;
But tho' he ſtill her lovelineſs could prize,
No longer his impetuous will rebell'd.
She, conſcious of the change, her moiſten'd eyes
Rais'd, and around her look'd with well-aſſum'd ſurprize.

LXXX.

" Truant to love!" ſhe cried, " whoſe fancies weak
" With his imperious dictates interfere,
" Joys more adapted to thy cold heart ſeek!
" Ah! leave me, thou ingrate! to drop the tear,
" While for thy ſake, ſtill to my mem'ry dear,
" In ſilent grief I waſte my virgin bloom;
" While the ſad willow on my brow I wear,
" And, ſeeking ſome remote congenial gloom,
" Invoke propitious death, and court an early tomb.

LXXXI.

" Adieu! too well belov'd, too faithleſs youth!
" Soon all memorial ſhall thy mind diſmiſs
" Of tranſient paſſion and oft-plighted truth.
" Farewell! but take with thee this parting kiſs:
" By this fond pledge of love, by this, and this,
" Myſelf, my charms, I conſecrate as thine.
" Oh! that while thus our ſouls are bath'd in bliſs,
" While thus in mutual tranſport we entwine,
" Congenial whiſpers might proclaim thee wholly mine!"

LXXXII.

Thus ſaying, to her wildly throbbing breaſt,
Which roſe as if convuls'd with amorous pain,
With graſp ecſtatic ſhe the Monarch preſs'd.
A kindling ardour ruſh'd thro' ev'ry vein,
Panting he gaz'd, ſcarce able to ſuſtain
The ſoft impreſſions which his heart aſſail'd.
But faith and duty ſoon reſum'd their reign:
He paus'd, he ſigh'd, as reaſon's pow'r unveil'd
The artifice refin'd which o'er his ſoul prevail'd.

LXXXIII.

Yet ſtill his wand'ring ſenſes ſeem'd enchain'd,
Virtue and vice in doubtful balance hung;
Now yielded he, now firmneſs he regain'd,
While round him ſhe with warm careſſes clung;
When, ſuddenly, the foreſt's precincts rung
With cries of mirth and muſic's gladſome ſound;
Gay melodies enliv'ning voices ſung,
And thro' the verdant glade with nimble bound
The dancing group advanc'd, and weav'd their mazy round.

LXXXIV.

Induſtriouſly they fram'd their agile meaſure,
While from their eyes, than ſparkling gems more bright,
Flaſh'd wanton paſſion and tumultuous pleaſure.
At ev'ry turn, their veſtments looſe and light,
Caught by the flitting gale, reveal'd to ſight
Beauties, which well the fancy might inſpire
With tranſport, and tumultuous hopes excite:
Now ſeem'd they urg'd by love's imperious fire,
Now loſt in ecſtacies voluptuous to expire.

LXXXV.

" See where the amorous pair recline," they cried;
" With bliſs tranſported, and untir'd by love,
" Themſelves from mortal view they ſeek to hide.
" Hither we come your pleaſures to improve,
" With us thro' all the windings of the grove,
" Beſprent with moſs, by perfum'd breezes fann'd,
" To nature's laws obedient, gaily rove;
" Hark to our cheerful call, and hand in hand
" Follow the merry pipe, and join our feſtive band."

LXXXVI.

Thus ſaying, wreaths of every ſcent and hue,
Arrang'd with varied and fantaſtic taſte,
O'er the aſtoniſh'd King they lightly threw.
A myrtle chaplet on his head they plac'd,
While the fond Nymph a crown of roſes grac'd,
Red as the bluſhes which her cheeks o'erſpread.
More deep theſe grew as ſhe the Prince embrac'd:
But rapidly the ſoft ſuffuſion fled,
As ſtruggling to eſcape her circling arms he ſaid:

LXXXVII.

" No! tho' more potent are thy matchleſs charms
" Than all which human beauty can diſplay,
" Tho' mad temptation revel in thine arms,
" I muſt not, cannot, thy command obey.
" Love, wedded Love, aſſerts his rightful ſway:
" Vows of recorded truth from Heav'n above
" Speak to my ſoul, and ſummon me away;
" They bid me quit this faſcinating grove,
" And fly the haunts impure of proſtituted love!"

LXXXVIII.

He ſaid, and ſpringing from her claſp eſſay'd
To trace the path which wound within the wood.
But ſoon the minſtrel group his footſteps ſtay'd;
Again their wanton movements they purſued,
Their frontleſs arts and blandiſhments renew'd,
And, unreſtrain'd by fear and unaſham'd,
Chanted in notes obſcene their orgies lewd;
Their eye-balls roll'd, by paſſion's force inflam'd
The fire, which rag'd within, their burning cheeks proclaim'd.

LXXXIX.

Where'er he turn'd, they circled round him cloſe,
New geſtures framing, while their impious din
And lawleſs mirth in louder chorus roſe.
" Think not," he cried, " that theſe diſguiſements thin
" To deeds of guilt my conſtant heart can win.
" If ſpecious modeſty has fail'd to gain
" My raptur'd ſoul, and urge me on to ſin,
" Lewdneſs profeſs'd attempts the taſk in vain:
" Her flimſy toils I ſpurn with horror and diſdain.

XC.

" Ceaſe baſe ſeducers! ceaſe; againſt your art
" By truth and virtue is my firm mind ſteel'd.
" If ye be human, hence, far hence depart;
" But, in thoſe forms if Dæmons be conceal'd,
" Guard me, ye Saints! ye ſuccouring Angels ſhield!
" Great Ruler of the world! thy ſuppliant hear;
" Strip their falſe ſemblance, let them ſtand reveal'd:
" Tho' rob'd in all their terrors they appear,
" Arm'd with thy faith my ſoul can never yield to fear!"

XCI.

Thus ſpake the pious Monarch: nor in vain
To heav'n's tribunal roſe his fervent pray'r.
Still'd were the clamours of the boiſt'rous train:
Loud thunders burſt, and the pale light'ning's glare
Shot thro' the murky and diſtemper'd air:
Clouds tempeſt-driv'n the face of day o'ercaſt;
Shrill cries were heard of anguiſh and deſpair;
Earth trembling ſhook throughout her caverns vaſt,
And nature ſeem'd to bend before th' o'erwhelming blaſt.

XCII.

As, on the mimic ſtage, an audience ſees
The gay machines and pictur'd ſcen'ry riſe,
While houſes, landſcapes, palaces and trees,
Loſt in confuſion vaniſh from their eyes;
So, rapt in awe, and ſtiffen'd with ſurpriſe,
The wide convulſion England's King ſurvey'd:
The beechen grove, the flow'rs of various dyes,
The riv'let clear, the bank with moſs array'd,
Seem'd from his view to ſhrink and ſuddenly to fade.

XCIII.

The rugged foreſt, now diſguis'd no more,
Illumin'd ſhone with gleams of fiery red:
Amongſt it's boughs the wind, with ſullen roar
Ruſhing amain, it's devaſtation ſpread;
Before it's rage the oak's high-branching head,
Yielding, with fragments huge beſtrew'd the plain;
While, as if bound by ſupernat'ral dread,
And motionleſs, the lately ſportive train
Proclaim'd with fearful ſcreams their agonizing pain.

XCIV.

Them as he view'd the Monarch loudly cried:
" By His eternal and tranſcendent name,
" Who, tow'rds His throne His choſen flock to guide,
" A meek partaker of man's ſtate became,
" Theſe borrow'd forms relinquiſh! Stampt with ſhame,
" Hence to your dark infernal caves repair!
" There amid kindred glooms and racking flame,
" For endleſs ages teſtimony bear,
" That man, by virtue grac'd, is heav'n's peculiar care."

XCV.

Thus in commanding accents ſpake the King.
The Fiends, abaſh'd and wildly-ſhudd'ring, heard
His invocation dread. With out-ſtretch'd wing
Their bulk horrific as aloft they rear'd,
Unmaſk'd their full deformity appear'd.
Nor leſs obedient to the high beheſt
His courſe obſcene amid them BELIAL ſteer'd:
No more a Nymph the flow'ry couch he preſs'd,
But rob'd in hell's array a Dæmon ſtood confeſs'd.

XCVI.

As thro' the troubled atmoſphere they paſs'd,
On the triumphant King of fell deſpite
And baffled hate their glances ſtern they caſt,
While 'mid their ranks, ſhrouded in blackeſt night,
His form ſtill undiſclos'd to mortal ſight,
Pre-eminence imperial SATAN claim'd.
Aw'd by ſuperior pow'r, he check'd their flight,
And, as his breaſt with ſtruggling paſſions flam'd,
With voice like thunder thus tremendouſly exclaim'd.

XCVII.

" To combat heav'n's high will in Me no force,
" No pow'rs in Me, tho' Arch-angelic, dwell;
" But, vanquiſh'd by thy conſtancy, my courſe,
" Diſhonour'd and o'ercome, I bend tow'rds hell.
" Thy matchleſs worth ſhall England's foes repel:
" Fortune ſhall now her former wrongs redreſs;
" No more ſhall Dæmons frame their potent ſpell,
" And urge their toils thy virtue to oppreſs.
" Laſting renown is thine, and well-deſerv'd ſucceſs."

XCVIII.

He ſaid; and mounting high athwart the gloom,
While o'er the ſky with coruſcation foul
Red meteors glanc'd, he wav'd his ſounding plume,
Attended by his crew, whoſe piercing howl
And ſhrieks appalling ſpoke his ſtrong controul.
RICHARD beheld them paſs: in wonder loſt
He pour'd in fervent pray'r his raptur'd ſoul,
Then, with new ardour fill'd, the foreſt croſs'd,
And joyful ſought the ſpot where yet repos'd his hoſt.

END OF BOOK XV.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Richard, proceeding on his march, meets Blondel, who is accompanied by Chariclæa, and who delivers to him the keys of Fecan, and preſents to him his priſoner Prince John---Interview between the latter and Richard---Blondel narrates the capture of Fecan---Chariclæa gives an account of what befel her after being carried off from Rouen, and of the manner in which ſhe was reſcued by Blondel---Richard approves of and confirms their union---They return to Rouen.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVI.

I.

BENEATH the weſtern wave repos'd the ſun,
When from the foreſt, late th' eventful ſcene
Of ſpells accurs'd, RICHARD his march begun.
Paſſing Varengeville and it's precincts green,
They croſs'd the gentle and meand'ring Ene,
Which, from Pavilli gliding, near Duclair
Pays it's clear tribute to the princely Seine.
Thence, thro' extending plains and vallies fair,
With vig'rous ſteps they aim'd to reach La Foreſtiere.

II.

Her chaſteſt beauties round them to diſcloſe
Nature induſtrious ſeem'd. It was a night,
When all creation courted ſoft repoſe,
When the rapt poet's ſoul might wing it's flight
To realms of bliſs and regions of delight.
Not calmer was the hour, when HERO ſtood
And wav'd her flaming torch from Seſtos' height,
While bold LEANDER plough'd the billows rude,
And for her love diſdain'd the Helleſpontic flood.

III.

Still tinted were the weſtern Heav'ns with red,
Glowing, tho' ſoft; which, by gradations due
Melting, a gleam of ſolemn luſtre ſhed
O'er the firſt tinge of empyrean blue.
As from it's verge th' aſcending arch withdrew,
The firmament with deeper azure glow'd;
Throughout, their deſtin'd orbits to purſue,
Innum'rous ſtars and planets bright were ſtrew'd,
While 'midſt her dazzling train the moon majeſtic rode.

IV.

Her temper'd radiance far around ſhe ſhed.
While many a wood, impervious to her ray,
Obſcurely ſhrouded rear'd it's waving head,
O'er the far-ſpreading plains her beams would ſtray,
On the ſtill lake would undulating play,
Or with mild touch ſome rippling ſtream would gild.
No ſounds were heard, ſave where the owl her way
Whooting purſued, or Philomela thrill'd
Her ſoul-inſpiring ſong, and melody diſtill'd.

V.

By night advancing, halting in the day,
Yet always by their King's attention cheer'd,
O'er the Caletian field their toilſome way
With ſteady courſe the gallant warriors ſteer'd.
Inſpir'd by thirſt of fame they perſever'd
Unceaſingly their duty to fulfil,
'Till, on the ſecond morn, the ſun appear'd,
Scatt'ring his beams acroſs the vine-clad hill,
Which ſkirted with its baſe the plain where ſtood Foville.

VI.

Here, to recruit their ſtrength, awhile they ſtay'd:
But ſoon, as high their breaſts with ardour ſwell'd
T' aſſert the cauſe of innocence betray'd,
Their progreſs with redoubled zeal they held.
Not far had they advanc'd, when they beheld
A goodly troop, which o'er the diſtant plain,
As if on ſpeed intent, it's route impell'd:
Their vig'rous courſers ſeem'd to ſpurn the rein,
And o'er the duſty field came pouring on amain.

VII.

Ere long, ſuperbly waving in the gale,
The Engliſh Red-Croſs banner they eſpied:
Surmounting Gallia's flag and lilies pale,
It wanton'd in the breeze with lordly pride.
The well-arm'd Knight, who ſeem'd the hoſt to guide,
A charger huge of Frieſeland breed beſtrode,
Whoſe hoofs afar reſounded: by his ſide,
In converſe cloſe a graceful damſel rode,
While looſe her veil and robes of ſnowy whiteneſs flow'd.

VIII.

Approaching nearer, with a ſudden ſpring
Their leader leap'd to earth: with bended knee
He paid obeiſance to the martial King,
Preſenting to his hand a maſſive key.
" From Fecan's gates, again from thraldom free,
" This pledge accept," he cried; " her walls confeſs
" Thy rightful ſway, and wait thy high decree.
" Heav'n and it's Saints have deign'd our toils to bleſs,
" And grac'd our righteous cauſe with merited ſucceſs."

IX.

" My beſt-belov'd Blondel!" the Prince rejoin'd,
" The pow'rs immortal, which the brave defend,
" Have led thee on, and in thy cauſe combin'd.
" Hither we came our ſuccour prompt to lend,
" And from impending harm to ſave my friend:
" But thy exertions have out-ſtript our ſpeed.
" Say, by what wond'rous means, ere yet deſcend
" The fourth day's ſhadows, haſt thou wrought a deed,
" Which fixes on thy brow fame's ever-blooming meed?"

X.

" Honour and Love," the youthful hero cried,
" Combin'd with Loyalty my arm have brac'd,
" And Providence my efforts deign'd to guide.
" Thus fortified, my vent'rous courſe I trac'd,
" Brav'd the wild ſea, embattled legions fac'd,
" And ſav'd yon peerleſs maid from threat'ning fate.
" Triumphs more ample yet my toils have grac'd:
" Here, in your preſence, ſtands the Prince ingrate,
" T' abide his Sov'reign's will, his cenſure to await."

XI.

Him interrupting, thus the King exclaim'd.
" Awhile th' eventful narrative ſuſpend:
" With him, whoſe arts 'gainſt England's welfare aim'd,
" Whoſe vaulting hope made him from duty bend,
" And all the ſacred bonds of kindred rend,
" It firſt behoves to ſpeak. Awhile retire,
" And bid your troop at diſtance due attend:
" Whate'er contempt his conduct may inſpire,
" The ſemblance of reſpect a Brother's claims require."

XII.

The warlike band delay'd not to retreat,
While, with an air which inward grief expreſs'd,
RICHARD advanc'd the captive Prince to meet.
Silent he ſtood, awaiting his beheſt;
Downcaſt his eyes; his arms acroſs his breaſt
Folded dejectedly; by ſhame and fear,
Mark'd ſtrongly on his varying cheek, depreſs'd:
As if tormented by reflections drear,
He ſigh'd, and trickling fell from either eye a tear.

XIII.

As ſtruggling paſſions in his breaſt awoke,
RICHARD, regarding him with fix'd diſdain
And temper'd firmneſs, thus the Prince beſpoke.
" If thou haſt feelings, do they not arraign
" And ſting thy ſoul, that thus we meet again!
" That thus in arms and menacing array,
" Meanly enroll'd in perjur'd PHILIP's train,
" Thou dar'ſt his impious ſtandard to diſplay,
" And league with him thy King and country to betray?

XIV.

" My Brother!—Does not thy degenerate heart,
" When thus my lips pronounce the once-lov'd name,
" With agonizing recollections ſmart?
" Does not thy conſcience at it's ſound proclaim
" Thy frontleſs treaſons and recorded ſhame?
" Unworthy offſpring of our royal line!
" Could not the memory of our father's fame
" The impulſe check, which led thee France to join,
" And 'gainſt thy ligeance ſworn with traitors to combine?

XV.

" Ere yet, ſeduc'd by their inſidious plan,
" Rebellion's lure thy gratitude betray'd,
" My bounty thy ambitious hopes outran:
" Seven Earldoms thy ſupreme command obey'd;
" Thy banners on eight caſtles were diſplay'd,
" Whoſe territories form'd thy rich domain;
" To thee a gen'rous people rev'rence paid.
" Did I in ought thy graſping hopes reſtrain?
" Say, was to RICHARD e'er prefer'd thy ſuit in vain?

XVI.

" Yet could not theſe thy graſping ſoul content.
" When our great cauſe had ſummon'd me away,
" When England by domeſtic ills was rent,
" When I, to HENRY's tyranny a prey,
" Within the tow'rs of dread TRIVALLIS lay;
" When honour, duty, and affection's voice
" Bad you a zeal pre-eminent diſplay,
" Then were diſgrace and infamy your choice,
" Then could an Engliſh Prince in England's woes re-
[joice.

XVII.

" Imagine not to gild with vain pretence
" Theſe aggravated wrongs: have not recourſe
" To arts which ill can gloſs thy rank offence,
" Leſt thy weak artifice my ſoul ſhould force
" To purpoſe more ſevere. Prey to remorſe,
" From England exil'd, ſeek ſome diſtant coaſt,
" Find, if thou can'ſt, from conſcience ſome reſource,
" Implore forgiveneſs for thine impious boaſt,
" And bluſh whene'er thou think'ſt on what thy crimes
[have loſt!"

XVIII.

As thus with mingled dignity and ſcorn
The Monarch ſpoke, the Prince's heaving breaſt
Seem'd with the war of ſtruggling paſſions torn.
Tears for a while his inward pangs confeſs'd,
Then, falling at his feet, his knees he preſs'd;
" Oh! deign a ſelf-accuſing wretch to ſpare,
He cried, " Oh! deign his ſentence to arreſt!
" Oh! let him ſtrive his errors to repair,
" But oh! condemn him not to exile and deſpair!

XIX.

" How can I beſt my conſcious guilt proclaim,
" How my remorſe and penitence define,
" Or make a fit atonement for my ſhame?
" Each ſecret of thy foe, each deep deſign,
" Whiſper'd in confidential truſt, are mine;
" His plans and all his purpoſes I know:
" Theſe, if thou deign'ſt to pardon, all are thine.
" His failings and his weakneſs I can ſhew,
" And well can I direct thy unexpected blow.

XX.

" Shall I to thee his private haunts betray,
" And thro' blind paths, by me well underſtood,
" To his deſtruction ſhall I lead the way,
" Where thy avenging ſword may drink his blood,
" And by one ſtroke hoſtilities conclude?
" Oh! try me thus, but ſpare my cruel doom!
" Pity theſe tears, be merciful and good!
" Let me again my wonted ſtate reſume!
" Think on our honour'd Sire, Oh! think on her whoſe [womb—"

XXI.

" No more!" exclaim'd th' indignant Monarch: "Ceaſe
" Thy fruitleſs tears and lamentation vain!
" Thy recent guilt they ſerve but to increaſe.
" Could he by fraud the Gallic kingdom gain,
" Think not that RICHARD would his glory ſtain,
" Or owe ſucceſs to ſtratagems ſo baſe.
" Tempt not to fury then my juſt diſdain,
" Nor, while thy deeds belie their gen'rous race,
" Our parents' ſacred names let thy falſe tongue diſgrace.

XXII.

" If, ſtampt with infamy, by all deſpis'd,
" Life yet has charms, take it, and meanly live:
" If poor diſtinctions ſtill by thee are priz'd,
" And vanity the ſenſe of ſhame ſurvive,
" Still to maintain thy old precedence ſtrive.
" Small faith to thy profeſſions I attach:
" I know thee, JOHN, and, while I thus forgive,
" I mark thy working paſſions on the watch,
" Offences freſh to frame, and treaſons new to hatch.

XXIII.

" But, tho' I know thee well, I fear thee not:
" Tho', in my abſence, from thy recreant ſoul
" O'erweening hope prevail'd my rights to blot,
" And urg'd thee on to deeds of import foul,
" My preſence ſhall thy enterprize controul.
" Exiſt then, if thou wilt, of honour ſhorn;
" Let pageantry for character conſole:
" The object of a loyal nation's ſcorn,
" Let thy deſpis'd eſtate ſucceeding traitors warn!"

XXIV.

Thus with commanding air the Monarch ſaid,
And turning tow'rds the hoſt, where brave BLONDEL
At diſtance due with CHARICLÆA ſtay'd,
With courteous phraſe he urg'd the Chief to tell
The chances which his vent'rous queſt befel.
" When thus," he cried, " your fortunes you narrate,
" Fear not on ev'ry circumſtance to dwell:
" My friend's renown, and CHARICLÆA's fate,
" In ev'ry Engliſh heart ſtrong int'reſt muſt create."

XXV.

Huſh'd was the croud, when thus commenc'd the Chief.
' On that dread night, when from Normannia's Park
' The Princeſs was convey'd, for her relief
' With fifty knights I haſten'd to embark.
' The moon with clouds was veil'd, the ſky was dark,
' No favouring planet ſhot its guiding ray;
' Yet ſeem'd propitious winds t' impel our bark,
' Which ſwiftly thro' Seine's waters cut it's way,
' And ample progreſs made ere dawn'd approaching day.

XXVI.

' As thus our courſe we held, in converſe grave
' Our time we paſs'd, how beſt the peerleſs Maid
' From her audacious raviſhers to ſave.
' Their various projects many a Chief diſplay'd,
' And many a plan and ſtratagem was laid,
' Which ſtill ſome obvious difficulties croſs'd:
' At length, brave SOMERVILLE, who nought had ſaid,
' But on whoſe judgment all our band repos'd,
' Roſe, and at my requeſt his counſel thus diſclos'd.

XXVII.

" When bold Sir GUALTER, from whoſe loins I boaſt
" To trace my lineage, left his father's ſeat,
" And join'd his vaſſals to the Norman hoſt
" Which prov'd it's worth by HAROLD's dire defeat,
" He gain'd at Wichnovre a calm retreat.
" But ſtill regardful of his kindred's claim,
" Them oft with kind remembrance would he greet,
" And, when occaſion ſuited, hither came,
" More by fraternal love united than by name.

XXVIII.

" The like obſervance he his offspring taught,
" And they their children. Oft my rev'rend Sire,
" With pious care and warm attachment fraught,
" Has left his home, impell'd by ſtrong deſire
" From pomp and courtly ſplendour to retire,
" To view his anceſtorial ſhades once more.
" The ſame fond impulſe ſeem'd my heart t' inſpire:
" With him I lov'd to trace our parent ſhore,
" And all the ſcenes enhanc'd by abſence to explore.

XXIX.

" Once, as from Pevenſey our accuſtom'd courſe
" In a ſmall bark tow'rds Honfleur we purſued,
" An equinoctial ſtorm with threat'ning force
" Aſſail'd us ſuddenly: the billows rude
" Waſh'd o'er our deck, and with alarm renew'd
" The wild wind as it roar'd around we heard.
" Near us at length ſtern Fecan's cliffs we view'd,
" Which ruggedly their beetling ſummits rear'd,
" While o'er them tow'ring high her battlements appear'd.

XXX.

" By fortune favour'd, with aſſiduous care
" A refuge in the harbour we obtain'd.
" There, our diſmantled veſſel to repair,
" And to refreſh our crew, to ſtay conſtrain'd,
" Awhile within the fortreſs we remain'd.
" Inceſſant tho' our toils, and brief the ſpace,
" Some knowledge of it's wide extent I gain'd,
" And heedfully ſurvey'd the wond'rous place,
" Intent it's nat'ral ſtrength and labour'd works to trace.

XXXI.

" Wond'rous indeed it is, ſublime, and dread.
" An hundred fathoms from the ſea in height,
" The cliff tremendouſly exalts it's head:
" Half-way the ſea-birds, winging their ſwift flight,
" Skim thro' the air, and mock the dazzled ſight;
" As he looks downwards from it's perilous verge,
" The giddy ſentinel in wild affright
" Shudders, while, far beneath, the roaring ſurge
" Breaks, and the tyrant waves the rocks embattled ſcourge.

XXXII.

" Thus tow'rds the ſea impregnably ſecur'd,
" Tow'rds it's ſmall river and th' adjacent land
" The ſafety of the town is well aſſur'd.
" On ev'ry ſide enormous ramparts ſtand,
" High heave her mounds, her ditches wide expand,
" Unnumber'd turrets menacing the ſky,
" Charg'd with machines, with vet'ran warriors mann'd,
" In ev'ry quarter meet th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
" And ſeem extrinſic force ſuperbly to defy.

XXXIII.

" Againſt ſuch works, howe'er your valour known
" May urge th' attempt, expect not to prevail.
" True courage never is by raſhneſs ſhewn:
" Where order'd armies might in vain aſſail,
" Our little band, howe'er reſolv'd, muſt fail;
" Unleſs indeed ſome means we could deviſe,
" By which the cliff we might ſucceed to ſcale,
" And to the ramparts unobſerv'd might riſe:
" Then might our bold attack th' unheeding guard ſur-
[prize."

XXXIV.

' As thus the Chieftain ſpoke, involv'd in thought
' I weigh'd his words, and ſtraight my working mind,
' Ardent for fame, a bold idea caught.
' Forthwith it's execution I aſſign'd
' To SOMERVILLE, and bad him try to find
' The means of ent'ring Fecan's guarded wall.
' BAYNTUN with him his ready ſervice join'd,
' Whom, whatſoe'er of peril might befal,
' I knew no toils could check, no perils could appal.

XXXV.

' Without delay we ſought the northern ſtrand.
' They, their commiſſion eager to conclude,
' Haſten'd near Bolbec's little ſtream to land,
' And by Ilebonne their hardy route purſued.
' Our purpos'd courſe we inſtantly renew'd.
' As night commenc'd, bold Havre's point we paſs'd,
' And, with the riſing ſun, at diſtance view'd
' Fecan's proud cliffs, ſoaring diſtinct and vaſt,
' Which o'er the ſubject main their lengthen'd ſhadow caſt.

XXXVI.

‘ Low'ring our maſt, at diſtance due we kept,
‘ And, tow'rds a creek obſcure our cautious way
‘ Bending, our oars the ocean's ſurface ſwept.
‘ There, while our bark ſecure from notice lay,
‘ We paſs'd impatiently the tedious day.
‘ Alternately we labour'd and repos'd:
‘ Anxious alike our ardour to diſplay,
‘ And by the project we had form'd engroſs'd,
‘ We perfected our taſk ere yet the ev'ning clos'd.

XXXVII.

‘ The ſky was overcaſt: thick-mantling night
‘ Spread o'er the firmament her murky veil;
‘ No planet gleam'd; no ſtar with friendly light
‘ It's face adorn'd: ſometimes, before the gale
‘ Propell'd, the clouds with ſwifter courſe would ſail,
‘ And momentary chaſms of void ſpace leave,
‘ Thro' which the moon, with beams ſubdued and pale
‘ Glancing, the waves allow'd us to perceive,
‘ Which round the rocky baſe ſeem'd ſullenly to heave.

XXXVIII.

‘ The gloom, congenial to our views, we hail'd.
‘ Quitting our friendly creek, along the coaſt,
‘ Now half-deſerted by the flood, we ſail'd,
‘ While Fecan's cliffs, their heads in darkneſs loſt,
‘ Tower'd o'er us. Turning to my gallant hoſt,
‘ Who ſilently ſurvey'd them, thus I ſaid:
“ Behold, brave comrades! our appointed poſt;
“ Here muſt the proof of Engliſh worth be made,
“ Here muſt your gen'rous ſcorn of danger be diſplay'd.

XXXIX.

" What tho' tremendouſly theſe barriers riſe,
" What tho' their baſe inceſſant billows lave?
" Honour commands, and leads us to our prize!
" From trait'rous force the Cyprian Maid to ſave
" She bids us intermediate danger brave.
" Should we, her call obeying, meet our doom,
" Should fate decree us here a wat'ry grave,
" Our memory dear to chivalry ſhall bloom,
" And valour's choiceſt wreaths ſhall decorate our tomb."

XL.

' Not long did we await, for from the height
' Wide-waving ſoon a flaming torch we view'd:
' It's glare ſhot thro' the ſhades obſcure of night,
' And mark'd with partial gleam the ſummit rude.
' Judging that SOMERVILLE had well purſued
' His enterpriſing courſe, without delay
' From our ſmall deck another torch I ſhew'd,
' And thrice diſclos'd it's agitated ray;
' Then, hurrying to the beech, upon our oars we lay.

XLI.

' Around us all was dreary, ſtill and dark,
' When, as the crag impatiently we eyed,
' A cord deſcending ſlowly tow'rds our bark,
' And undulating o'er the mountain's ſide,
' The riſing breeze obeying, we eſpied.
' To this the cable, thro' whoſe long extent
' Short ſticks at diſtances were fix'd, we tied,
' By whoſe propitious aid we boldly meant
' To urge our deſp'rate courſe, and dare the dread aſcent.

XLII.

' Again our flaming ſignal we diſplay'd.
' Straightway our friends their labour 'gan to ply,
' And ſoon the huge machine their hands obey'd.
' Far as our ſight it's progreſs could deſcry,
' We ſaw it ſlowly mounting tow'rds the ſky.
' In agonizing ſilence ſtill we gaz'd,
' Now a pray'r off'ring, breathing now a ſigh,
' As on the height our wiſtful eyes we rais'd;
' When ſuddenly the torch again reſplendent blaz'd.

XLIII.

" Comrades!" I cried, " th' eventful time is come,
" When on ourſelves and Heav'n we muſt depend.
" The Pow'r, whoſe will muſt regulate our doom,
" The boldly-daring ſoldier will befriend.
" Say, who among ye all will firſt aſcend?
" Whom as our vent'rous leader ſhall we greet?
" I, as the laſt, your progreſs will attend,
" And reſolute my purpoſe to complete,
" My ſword ſhall bar his way who meditates retreat."

XLIV.

' I ſaid. One impulſe ſeem'd t'inſpire my hoſt;
' All at pre-eminence in danger aim'd,
' Alike all courted the diſtinguiſh'd poſt,
' When SEGRAVE, louder than the reſt, exclaim'd,
" Sprung from a race of valiant captains, fam'd
" For deeds whoſe luſtre decorates our clime,
" By me my anceſtors ſhall ne'er be ſham'd:
" Be mine the glorious priv'lege firſt to climb,
' And firſt to meet the foe on yonder heights ſublime!"

XLV.

' In vain I ſtrove to moderate his pride,
' In vain I told him that a Chief ſo young
' Could ill ſuffice our enterprize to guide;
' He from my hold with wild impatience flung,
' And on the ſwinging cable nimbly ſprung,
' Which with his ſudden effort ſeem'd to ſhake.
' Mounting, the ſong of TALIFER he ſung,
' And vauntingly beſought us haſte to make,
' Leſt we ſhould prove too late his triumph to partake.

XLVI.

' With calmer fortitude the reſt advanc'd.
' Graſping the ladder with obſervant heed,
' As tow'rds the ſea beneath our eyes we glanc'd,
' And felt the cable tremble with our tread,
' The unexampled boldneſs of the deed
' With ſtrange and ſolemn awe our boſoms ſmote.
' But ſoon unable were we to recede:
' For now the riſing tide remov'd our boat,
' And on the billows wide our cable 'gan to float.

XLVII.

' Now at the mercy of the ſea and wind,
' And vibrating with both, our hoſt aſcended.
' Darkneſs with riſk t'appal our ſouls combin'd:
' The frail ſupport on which our lives depended,
' The doubtful iſſue which our toils attended,
' The cliffs above, the breaking waves beneath,
' All that could daunt the firmeſt ſpirit blended.
' Fate ſeem'd to menace in the breeze's breath,
' The ſurge with hollow roar denounc'd impending death.

XLVIII.

'Yet, urg'd by zeal and honour, on we went:
'And now, midway between the beach and ſky,
'We had accompliſh'd half our dread aſcent,
'And ſtill our purpoſe urg'd, when from on high
'I heard a feeble and half-utter'd cry,
'And ſuddenly was check'd our bold career.
'I learn'd that SEGRAVE, who had dar'd defy
'The horrors of the night and ocean drear,
'Had ſtopt, with terror ſtruck, and petrified with fear.

XLIX.

'Leſt the contagious influence of his dread
'Should thro' th' aſſociates of my toil pervade,
'(Which recollection of the horrors ſpread
'On all ſides round us not unlikely made)
'To him immediate orders I convey'd
'To mount aloft and prove himſelf a man.
'But vainly to arouſe him I eſſay'd.
'And now to ſhare th' alarm the reſt began,
'And thro' the crouded line deſponding murmurs ran.

L.

'Inflam'd by diſappointment and deſpair,
'And conſcious that a moment now to loſe
'Our fate would ſeal, I breath'd a haſty pray'r.
'Reſolv'd, whate'er might chance, myſelf t'expoſe,
'I bad my comrades keep in order cloſe,
'And, climbing o'er their backs, held on my way,
'Till to our daſtard guide at length I roſe.
'So overwhelm'd I found him with diſmay,
'That ſcarcely to my words could he attention pay.

LI.

'To 'wake him from his lethargy I ſought;
'But finding that to nothing he replied,
'Him by the throat with my left hand I caught,
'And, as I cloſely graſp'd him, to his ſide
'My faulchion keen I vig'rouſly applied.
'Soon as he felt it, as with pow'rs renew'd,
'To ſcale his courſe precipitous he tried.
'My comrades, now reviv'd, his ſteps purſued,
'And ſoon th' embattled height and SOMERVILLE we view'd.

LII.

'Now ruſh'd we on the unſuſpecting foe,
'Our enterprize impatient to conclude.
'Their braveſt warriors ſunk beneath our blow:
'Our ſwords were ſtain'd with Gallia's choiceſt blood:
'Uncheck'd our way thro' Fecan we purſued;
'Our ſhouts of triumph made her tow'rs reſound:
'No more th' apoſtate Prince our force withſtood:
'Fair CHARICLÆA ſafe from harm we found,
'Her ſmiles, our nobleſt meed, our arduous labours crown'd.'

LIII.

'Thrice nobly haſt thou wrought,' the King replied,
'And prov'd thyſelf a brave and worthy Knight.
'But ſay, BLONDEL! why ſeek'ſt thou thus to hide
'The further deeds of that eventful night,
'When victory deck'd thee with her trophies bright,
'And glory hail'd thee as her favourite ſon?
'Each intereſting circumſtance recite,
'Nor, with a modeſty ill-judging, ſhun
'The merited applauſe by gen'rous valour won.'

LIV.

He ended. Nought the youthful Champion ſaid,
But glowing bluſhes overſpread his cheek,
As thus with ſmiles exclaim'd the CYPRIAN Maid.
'Muſt I the triumphs of my hero ſpeak?
'Muſt I, in feeble phraſe and language weak,
'Become th' imperfect herald of his fame?
'Ah! why ſhould he, who dar'd my bonds to break,
'Who ſav'd my honour from deſpair and ſhame,
'The ſum of his deſerts thus ſcruple to proclaim?

LV.

'Say, is it not from feelings too refin'd
'Thou ſtriv'ſt thy ſignal merit to conceal?
'That look confirms my thought! thus to the wind
'I give my fears, thus what I boaſt to feel
'With virtuous confidence I dare reveal.
'To thee, great Prince! by whom his worth is known,
'To thy congenial ſoul I make appeal:
'I feel an int'reſt in his juſt renown,
'Share in his high exploits, and count his praiſe mine own!

LVI.

'Need I deſcribe what feelings pain'd my ſoul,
'When, by foul force from BERENGARIA torn,
'I fell within the Prince's dread controul?
'As down the ſtream our bark was ſwiftly borne,
'I gave myſelf to grief: ſad and forlorn
'I ruminated on my wayward fate,
'And anſwer'd only with increaſe of ſcorn
'The traitor's ſuit: nought but contempt and hate
'His adulation mean and proffers could create.

LVII.

' Soon to ſtern Fecan's dreaded walls we came.
' Here, as I weeping ſat, immers'd in thought,
' And rack'd with dread of peril and of ſhame,
' The Prince to calm my agitation fought,
' And arguments of doubtful import brought:
' But vain were his attempts my ſoul to move,
' Till, proſtrate at my feet, my hand he caught,
' And, with an inſolent avowal, ſtrove
' To plead his amorous ſuit, and urge his hateful love.

LVIII.

' Then from my trance arous'd, with high diſdain
' His boldneſs I beſought him to correct,
' And bad him his unlicenc'd hopes reſtrain.
' He, with an air of taunting diſreſpect,
' Exclaim'd, " Since thus my paſſion you neglect,
" Deaf to my vows, and to my ardour cold,
" On this ſtern pile and on my pow'r reflect:
" Your haughty beauties here I captive hold,
" 'Tis mine to rule your fate, your ſtubbornneſs to mould."

LXIX.

' He ſaid, and ſullenly the chamber left,
' Where I remain'd, alone, in anguiſh loſt,
' And of all hope, ſave that in Heav'n, bereft.
' Sad images of woe my fancy croſs'd:
' His impious threat'nings, his inhuman boaſt,
' A proſpect black and horrible reveal'd.
' Weeping I knelt, and to th' immortal hoſt,
' Guardians of virgin innocence, appeal'd,
' My unprotected ſtate from violence to ſhield.

LX.

‘ O'er the rude cliffs and far-extending main
‘ The hand of night her ſable veil had ſtrewn,
‘ And darkneſs held her ſoul-appalling reign:
‘ As if forgotten by the world, alone
‘ I liſten'd to the ſcreech-owl's diſmal moan,
‘ Which ſeem'd deſpair and madneſs to invoke,
‘ While, ever and anon, with hollow groan
‘ The hoarſe-reſounding ſurge at diſtance broke,
‘ And in my troubled mind reflexions ſad awoke.

LXI.

‘ But ſoon a diff'rent and more dreadful ſound
‘ Burſt o'er mine ear, portending perils nigh.
‘ The voice of feſtive mirth was heard around,
‘ And the wide chamber echo'd with the cry
‘ Of clam'rous joy and ſavage revelry.
‘ Mingled with horrid ſhouts oft roſe my name,
‘ And oft the brutal Prince, in accents high,
‘ His hopes of coming triumphs would proclaim,
‘ And vauntingly exult in my approaching ſhame.

LXII.

‘ Again to all-protecting Heav'n I knelt.
‘ As to it's throne my meek petition flew,
‘ Thrice arm'd againſt oppoſing fate I felt.
‘ But ſoon more near the threat'ning chorus drew:
‘ Thro' the long paſſages the noiſy crew
‘ Tow'rds my apartment lone appear'd to draw.
‘ The impious band now ent'ring met my view,
‘ And, as their torches blaz'd, with mingled awe
‘ And horror at their head my tyrant baſe I ſaw.

LXIII.

" Leave here ſome lights," he cried, " and then to reſt,
" Or to freſh revelling, let all retreat!"
' They prov'd obſervant of his foul beheſt,
' While he, advancing tow'rds my diſtant ſeat,
' Stagger'd along; my heart with terror beat
' As he approach'd, and ſcarce could I reſpire,
' As he eſſay'd his greetings to repeat:
' His eyes ſhot glances of impure deſire,
' Ting'd were his bloated cheeks with luſt's unhallow'd fire.

LXIV.

" Forgive, fair Nymph!" he cried, " if duty's call
" Kept me ſo long from beauty's ſhrine away.
" Thus at your feet, your willing ſlave, I fall.
" Now let your charms my paſt-gone toils repay;
" And, while thro' pleaſure's flow'ry paths we ſtray,
" While thro' new ſcenes of untried bliſs we rove,
" Increaſing joys ſhall grace the riſing day;
" Thy melting ſoul ſhall unknown tranſports prove,
" And own the matchleſs pow'r of all-commanding love."

LXV.

' He ſaid, and tow'rds me ſprung. I ſtarted back,
' And loudly cried, " Perfidious traitor, hence!
" Forbear thy baſe and daſtardly attack:
" Alike of courage deſtitute as ſenſe,
" Think'ſt thou to win me with thy vain pretence?
" Hop'ſt thou to realize the ills th' haſt plann'd?
" Heav'n and it's Saints will prove my ſure defence,
" Will arm my ſoul thy fury to withſtand,
" Will cruſh thy foul deſign, and blaſt thine impious hand!"

LXVI.

" Them and their force united I defy,"
' Rejoin'd the Prince; " Do not my hopes repel,
" Or coyly, when my pulſe with love beats high,
" When all my veins with madd'ning impulſe ſwell—"
' But how can I on his exceſſes dwell?
' Ah! let me to recount his words forbear,
' Nor, at th' expence of wounded feelings, tell
' The brutal phraſes which I bluſh'd to hear,
' The threats he vainly us'd, the oaths he dar'd to ſwear.

LXVII.

' At length, with paſſion and with wine inflam'd,
' Me to his hated breaſt he rudely caught,
' And boaſtfully his foul deſign proclaim'd.
' Now in my ſoul Heav'n's bleſt aſcendance wrought:
' With anger, ſcorn, and indignation fraught,
' I ſeiz'd the ſword depending by his ſide,
' And, ere of his unlook'd-for riſk he thought,
' To his unguarded neck the point applied,
' And thus, while flaſh'd mine eyes with kindling fury, cried:

LXVIII.

" Ceaſe, wretch deteſted! from my wrath retire;
" I feel immortal ſeraphs nerve my arm,
" Brace my firm ſoul, and force unfelt inſpire:
" Ceaſe, nor provoke my hand to work thy harm!"
' Starting and pale he ſhudder'd with alarm,
' But ſoon recov'ring, with accurs'd intent
' He roughly ſtrove my weak hand to diſarm,
' While I, th' attempt unable to prevent,
' Struggling, with frantic cries the vaulted chamber rent.

LXIX.

‘ Weaker and weaker now my forces grew,
‘ When, as his foul intent he ſtill purſued,
‘ With deaf’ning craſh the portal op’ning flew.
‘ Before us my preſerving angel ſtood!
‘ As if with more than human pow’rs endued,
‘ Forward he ruſh’d, and forcibly compell’d
‘ The traitor to give o’er his purpoſe rude.
‘ Him by the throat with potent graſp he held,
‘ While warring pride and fear his recreant boſom ſwell’d.

LXX.

‘ But ſoon ſuperior influence pride obtain’d.
‘ While flaſh’d with rage his eyes, “ Preſumptuous ſlave!
“ Say,” he exclaim’d, “ how haſt thou entrance gain’d?
“ Who to a ſtranger thus permiſſion gave
“ With ruffian violence my wrath to brave?
“ Unhand me, caitiff! or a fate expect,
“ From which no pow’r thy forfeit life ſhall ſave.
“ Where are my ſlothful guards? Let them correct
“ This inſolence, and thus atone for their neglect!”

LXXI.

‘ Struggling he ſpake, and made the echoing hall
‘ With outcries for his followers vile reſound.
‘ But him they heard not, nor obey’d his call.
‘ Soon thro’ the vaulted paſſages around
‘ Shrieks and laments aroſe, and groans profound,
‘ And exclamations dread with horror fraught,
‘ Amid the deaf’ning claſh of arms half drown’d.
‘ He ſhudder’d as th’ appalling ſounds he caught,
‘ And ſtill t’ eſcape the graſp of my protector ſought.

LXXII.

‘ Yet made he not the youth his hold forego,
‘ Who, ſcornfully regarding him, replied,
“ Prince! who I am hereafter may’ſt thou know.
“ Heav’n, whoſe all-ſeeing eye thy crime eſpied,
“ Me to ſubvert thy plans was pleas’d to guide.
“ To guard inſulted innocence I came,
“ To check thy foul and over-weening pride,
“ To vindicate yon ſuff’ring maiden’s fame,
“ And brand detected guilt with infamy and ſhame.”

LXXIII.

‘ Then turning tow’rds me, “ Lady!” cried the youth,
“ Subdue thy fears, and calm thy troubled ſoul.
“ Doubt not my active vigilance and truth.
“ No more th’ oppreſſor, who with purpoſe foul
“ At dead of night on thy retirement ſtole,
“ Shall here maintain his perſecuting ſway.
“ Henceforth thy pleaſure ſhall his fate controul:
“ My friends, who now their banners proud diſplay
“ On Fecan’s tow’rs, thy will are ready to obey.”

LXXIV.

“ Oh guardian of my honour!” I exclaim’d,
“ Say, can I e’er the ſervices requite,
“ Which ſav’d me from the fate his treaſons fram’d?
“ May Heav’n’s beſt bleſſings on thy head alight,
“ Conduct to glory thy tranſcendent might,
“ And ſtill to guard thee from misfortune deign!
“ But ah! remove yon traitor from my ſight,
“ Whoſe hateful preſence renovates my pain:
“ Leave me awhile alone compoſure to regain.”

LXXV.

Thus briefly, gracious Monarch! have I ſhewn
How CHARICLÆA's honour and repoſe
Their preſervation owe to him alone.
' Here fitly my recital might I cloſe,
' Could I remembrance of thoſe moments loſe,
' When, paſs'd his labours, back my hero came,
' And angels witneſs'd our eternal vows;
' When firſt I own'd a correſponding flame,
' And dar'd my heart's ſincere effuſion to proclaim.

LXXVI.

' To yonder Heav'n, which ſav'd me from deſpair,
' Let my exulting voice the truth confeſs:
' Let me the tranſport which I felt declare,
' When firſt I bluſhing heard his fond addreſs,
' When firſt he dar'd his tender ſuit to preſs,
' And all the feelings of his heart pourtray'd!
' Bleſt in the pow'r his high deſert to bleſs,
' The dictates pure of nature I obey'd,
' As to the gallant youth I thus reſponſive ſaid:

LXXVII.

" That now, from mis'ry and diſhonour free,
" My breaſt no more with dread and anguiſh ſwells,
" I owe, BLONDEL! to Providence and thee.
" My mind, while on thy noble deeds it dwells,
" Feels thy deſert, and forcibly impels
" My reaſon thy pretenſions juſt to own.
" True worth the miſt of prejudice diſpels:
" Tho' born the heireſs of the Cyprian throne,
" Thee my protector twice from peril have I known.

LXXVIII.

" I ſee thee great in virtue, and I ſcorn
" The poor diſtinction of an empty name:
" Valour's immortal wreaths thy brow adorn,
" And Europe's ſuffrage ſhall confirm thy fame.
" Far be from me that diſingenuous ſhame
" Which makes us glory in inflicting pain,
" Which, while it feels a correſponding flame,
" A cold indiff'rence teaches us to feign,
" And bids us love repay with harſhneſs and diſdain."

LXXIX.

The Maiden ceas'd. Her eyes with tranſport beam'd;
The tender bluſhes which her face o'er-ſpread
Heralds of joy and raptur'd feelings ſeem'd:
As ſhe reclin'd her half-averted head,
A ſmile celeſtial on the youth ſhe ſhed,
Who, kneeling, on the hand ſhe gave him bow'd.
" Ah CHARICLÆA! beſt belov'd!" he ſaid,
" Were by our King our union but allow'd!
" Ah! would his voice confirm the homage which I vow'd."

LXXX.

" Your love to ſanction," cried the feeling Prince,
" To ratify your plighted vows be mine!
" My full concurrence let me thus evince:
" May you with virtue happineſs combine,
" May love his choiceſt wreath for you entwine,
" Long may you bleſt alike and bleſſing live,
" And may a numerous and deſerving line
" From you, their great progenitors, derive
" Both principles and ſtrength in honour's race to ſtrive!"

LXXXI.

Thus ſpake the King, and join'd their willing hands.
They, like the flow'r which to the ſolar ray
It's golden circlet faithfully expands,
As if appropriate rev'rence to diſplay,
To gratitude and mutual joy gave way.
And now the gallant hoſt around them preſs'd
With greetings kind and gratulations gay;
And, emulous their merits to atteſt,
All hail'd their choice, and prais'd their Monarch's juſt beheſt.

LXXXII.

Nought now to ſtay their wiſh'd return remain'd.
Their vig'rous courſers o'er the champaign flew:
Paſſing Foville, St. Clair's high ſeat they gain'd;
Advancing thence, the foreſt met their view,
Polluted lately by th' infernal crew
Which RICHARD'S virtue had compell'd to flight.
It's paths accurs'd they ſought not to purſue,
But onward rode, and, ere the ſecond night
Approach'd, proud Rouen's walls rejoic'd their eager ſight.

LXXXIII.

Where, it's ſtream tending to the Seine, Rapaume
'Midſt meadows flow'r-beſprent and vallies fair,
Normannia's grace and pride, is ſeen to roam,
Their ample camp the warriors 'gan prepare.
Meantime, tow'rds Rouen haſt'ning to repair,
The King, eſcorted by his Chiefs, advanc'd,
Impatient to his anxious Queen to bear
Tidings of all that had ſo ſtrangely chanc'd,
By triumphs unforeſeen and full ſucceſs enhanc'd.

END OF BOOK XVI.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Council of the French---Their projects to amuſe the Engliſh by deceitful overtures, and to attack their divided forces---Their preparations being perceived by Mortimer, Reginald and Leſtang ſet out to apprize the King of them--- Their expedition and attack on Sancerre's camp---Richard, on Reginald's arrival, aſſembles a Council---Mountjoy brings Philip's inſidious propoſals---which are rejected---The Engliſh are order'd to prepare for battle on the morrow--- Parting between Richard and Berengaria.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVII.

I.

WHILE thus the Engliſh warriors won fair fame,
Beyond St. James's mount the Gallic hoſt
Fled in confuſion ſtrange, o'erwhelm'd with ſhame.
Blaſted their old renown, their honour loſt,
No more was heard their late exulting boaſt:
Far from th' entrenchments which their blood had dy'd,
They ſought again Gaalor's moated poſt;
There their diſmay and foul defeat to hide,
And, as they could, to ſooth their diſappointed pride.

II.

From all ſecluded, and to grief a prey,
Within the deep receſſes of his hold
PHILIP conſum'd the melancholy day.
He ſaw a dark futurity unfold,
And fancy wrought preſages dread to mould,
Of RICHARD's triumph, and his own diſgrace:
Tho' ſtill preſumptuous hope, with outline bold,
From JOHN's attempt would brighter proſpects trace,
And victory's ſplendid meed within his graſp would place.

III.

The gay enchantment bloſſom'd but to fade,
And fleeting tranſport yielded ſoon to care,
When, on Martainville's heights, in proud parade
He ſaw the crimſon banners kiſs the air,
And MORTIMER his ſpreading camp prepare.
More yet remain'd his anxious breaſt to pain:
For now, to fill the meaſure of deſpair,
His ſpies reported, that, acroſs the Seine,
Imperial RICHARD led his enterpriſing train.

IV.

Soon rumour's trump proclaim'd misfortunes new:
Of Fecan's loſs it told, on whoſe high tow'r,
Torn from his ſway, the Red Croſs ſtandard flew,
And JOHN's diſgrace, who, in diſaſtrous hour,
Surpriz'd, remain'd within his victor's pow'r.
As when a ſeaman with a tempeſt ſtrives,
And, while the elements around him ſhow'r,
His luckleſs veſſel tow'rds the breakers drives,
Th' augmented riſk his ſoul of energy deprives:

V.

So o'er his ſelf-accuſing ſpirit ſpread
Corroding anguiſh, terror and diſmay;
Doubts upon doubts aroſe, and dread on dread.
To all the pow'rful Peers who own'd his ſway,
He bad MOUNTJOY his mandate ſtraight convey
In council to convene: his high beheſt
They diſobey'd not, but without delay
Impatiently from ev'ry quarter preſs'd.
Them, when aſſembled, thus the troubled King addreſs'd.

VI.

" I know not, Chieftains! whether moſt to blame
" Obdurate fortune, or the weak neglect
" Of thoſe to whom I truſted Gallia's fame:
" But on the change 'tis dreadful to reflect,
" Which chance or treaſon have avail'd t' effect.
" The very means, which 'gainſt my foe I plann'd,
" Now 'gainſt myſelf he threatens to direct:
" On Fecan's walls his boaſtful banners ſtand,
" My moſt eſteem'd ally feels his revengeful hand.

VII.

" Our nobleſt youth, our beſt defence and pride,
" Unhonour'd preſs yon ill-conteſted plain:
" They bled, but not our fortunes to decide;
" They ſank, but not their country's cauſe to gain.
" Yet happier they, than thoſe who live to ſtain
" Their old renown with merited diſgrace,
" To ſee yon hoſtile bands, with ſtern diſdain
" Mocking our toils, their march inſulting trace,
" Dare us to new aſſaults, and brave us to our face.

VIII.

" Oh curs'd reflection! from our foul miſchance
" New triumphs Engliſh RICHARD will atchieve,
" And pluck freſh laurels from degraded France!
" What credit will th' hiſtorian's page receive,
" Which tells that Gallia's primeſt Chiefs could leave
" The path of glory ere their meed was won?
" Say, what can now our blighted hopes retrieve?
" Muſt we forego the ſtrife ſo well begun,
" And by conceſſions try impending riſk to ſhun?

IX.

" My ſoul the ſentiment ignoble ſpurns!
" Can I reſolve to own a vaſſal's ſway?
" No! at the thought my heart indignant burns!
" Let fate her blackeſt web of woe diſplay,
" Let fortune frown our int'reſts to betray,
" My rank ſuperior yet will I maintain!
" My ſword to honour yet ſhall hew my way:
" Reſolv'd to fall, or worthily to reign,
" My arm, without your aid, ſhall PHILIP's rights ſuſtain."

X.

Thus ſpake the Prince; and, while th' aſſembled Chiefs
In mute ſurprize were fix'd, SARGINES thus ſaid.
" Tho', Royal Sir, we ſhare in all the griefs
" By you with ſuch pathetic force diſplay'd,
" Ne'er can we own that Gallia's peers betray'd
" Their country's int'reſts or their own renown.
" Live we, alas! to hear our King degrade,
" By cenſures harſh, the guardians of his crown,
" Who oft in peril's front their loyalty have ſhewn!

XI.

" To us, who often at the price of blood
" Have reap'd immortal honour by his ſide,
" To us, who circling round him have withſtood
" Embattled hoſts and menac'd death defied,
" Shall honour's well-earn'd trophy be denied?
" Not thus of thoſe, who merit his applauſe,
" Does England's King injurioufly decide:
" He feels for thoſe whoſe zeal maintains his cauſe,
" And from their grateful hearts his beſt dependence draws.

XII.

" He ever is the ſame. When war's alarms
" Call'd forth his might, I've view'd him in the field,
" Like MARS himſelf pre-eminent in arms.
" Nor leſs his virtues were in peace reveal'd:
" Soldier himſelf, the ſoldier's pains he heal'd;
" He ſooth'd the anguiſh which he could not cure;
" To him the injur'd call'd, the weak appeal'd;
" So equal flow'd his juſtice and ſo pure,
" He ſeem'd his people's rights commiſſion'd to inſure."

XIII.

" And is it thus," exclaim'd th' indignant King,
" That, with the praiſes of my mortal foe,
" To my torn mind you conſolation bring?
" Curs'd be the virtues, which, with ſpecious ſhew,
" Forbid the ſtream of my renown to flow,
" And blaſt the glories which my deeds might claim;
" This is indeed the ſum of human woe,
" When Gallia's Peers conſpire their maſter's ſhame,
" And build on his deſpair his hated rival's fame!"

XIV.

" Sire!" cried SARGINES, " I hardly could have thought
" That truth's pure voice my Sov'reign could affect.
" By his harſh cenſure more diſcretion taught,
" I go to remedy my paſt neglect,
" And zeal by future prudence to correct."
He ſaid, and, ſtriving to ſuppreſs his heat,
Turn'd tow'rds the door with dignified aſpect:
But NANTEUIL, quick his purpoſe to defeat,
His ſteps arreſting led the warrior to his ſeat:

XV.

Then thus, in accents mild, his friend beſpoke.
" When anxious cares depreſs our Monarch's ſoul,
" It ſuits us not his anger to provoke:
" 'Twere wiſer and more gen'rous to controul
" His heart-felt griefs, his ſorrows to conſole.
" When, on the adverſe field, their banners wide
" Our foes with bold defiance ſhall unroll,
" Then may we aptly ſhew our martial pride,
" Urge our reſiſtleſs courſe, and threat'ning death deride."

XVI.

" Well haſt thou," he replied, " thy judgment ſhewn:
" Henceforth, I truſt, no leſs my ſelf-command
" Shall in debate than in war's front be known.
" But now more urgent topics ſhould be ſcann'd:
" Rouen's high walls, with Engliſh warriors mann'd,
" Our congregated forces ſtill oppoſe,
" And ſtill reproachful of our valour ſtand:
" With victory fluſh'd the legions of our foes
" Inſult us, while our hours in vain debate we loſe."

XVII.

Thus he. Around approving murmurs ſpread,
And emulous the Chieftains ſeem'd to cheer
Their gallant friend, when thus the Monarch ſaid.
" When ſtruggling paſſions in our mind we bear,
" It often chances that our judgment clear,
" Warp'd from it's bent, to doubts unjuſt gives way.
" If I have err'd, forget it, noble Peer!
" Henceforth my confidence ſhall well repay
" The true and loyal faith which all your deeds diſplay.

XVIII.

" From the advantage which our foes have gain'd,
" We may preſume, that ſcarcely will they now
" From deeds of greater import be reſtrain'd,
" Should we, by ſloth or negligence, allow
" To full maturity their means to grow:
" Freſh reinforcements, from their neighb'ring coaſt,
" To ſwell their ranks inceſſantly will flow,
" While we, with blighted hopes and honour loſt,
" Shall be compell'd to fly before their conq'ring hoſt.

XIX.

" Since ſuch our inſtant peril, I propoſe
" By crafty propoſitions firſt to deal,
" By terms inſidious to beguile our foes,
" And ſuch conditions ſpecious to reveal,
" As may induce them to relax their zeal.
" Should the event of this defeat my aim,
" To your known proweſs then muſt I appeal;
" You then, regardful of your well-earn'd fame,
" Your King and Country's praiſe by freſh deſert will claim.

XX.

" Then be it thine, DES BARRES! to keep at bay
" The armament, which, on Martainville's height,
" It's ſtation holds in menacing array,
" While I, conducting tow'rds Rapaume my might,
" Provoke my weaken'd rival to the fight.
" Meantime, while we to what behoves attend,
" The Chiefs diſpers'd on every hand invite,
" Hither with inſtant ſpeed their march to bend,
" By a deciſive blow our menac'd ills to end."

XXI.

He ſaid. With grief and inward diſcontent
The Chieftains heard the projects he had plann'd:
Each from his preſence ſad and ſilent went,
And ſought the ſtation of his ſep'rate band.
Meanwhile, as theſe enforc'd their King's command,
From the high mount, which overlook'd the plain,
Brave MORTIMER their various movements ſcann'd:
As from their camp pour'd forth the warlike train,
On every ſide aroſe the trumpet's martial ſtrain.

XXII.

To REGINALD, the partner of his care,
He cried, " Or ill their purpoſes I gueſs,
" Or an attack our enemies prepare.
" See'ſt thou, as if preſuming on ſucceſs,
" Their legions with impatience onward preſs?
" Mark you yon Knight, advancing o'er the field,
" With aſpect bold and dignified addreſs,
" On whoſe emblazon'd and far-ſpreading ſhield
" A leopard charg'd with gold Byzantines is reveal'd?

XXIII.

" 'Tis brave DES BARRES, in peril's front oft tried:
" Thoſe enſigns on the memorable day
" He gain'd, when Acre PHILIP's force defied,
" Condemn'd to own our more ſucceſsful ſway.
" See, as amid their ranks he holds his way,
" The def'rence which his high atchievements claim
" With ſalutation due the warriors pay,
" While with exulting ſhouts they hail his name,
" His oft-tried worth declare and well-atteſted fame.

XXIV.

" Truſt me, my friend! the hour is near at hand,
" When, to chaſtiſe our over-weening foe,
" RICHARD's juſt cauſe our proweſs will demand.
" It glads my heart to find, that thoſe, who owe
" So deeply, now appear diſpos'd to ſhew
" Some inclination to diſcharge their debt.
" My ſpirits at the thought more freely flow!
" Oh! that already we were fairly met,
" That the vaſt ſtake were on our favour'd faulchions ſet!"

XXV.

" All ſeems," replied the Chief, " to indicate,
" That our opponents are reſolv'd to try
" The battle's iſſue, and to tempt their fate.
" Methinks, ſince thus their movements we deſcry,
" We ſhould our friends at Rouen left ſupply
" With prompt intelligence of their deſign.
" Perhaps our King returning may be nigh;
" Aware of their intent, his force may join,
" And 'gainſt the rude aſſault with LEICESTER may combine.

XXVI.

" Yet, while their legions thus the champaign fill,
" And while around the foe their ſtations hold,
" The enterprize demands no vulgar ſkill.
" Me, ever for our Monarch's int'reſts bold,
" Prepar'd to execute the taſk behold!
" The ev'ning lours my purpoſe to befriend,
" Their ſombrous veil propitious clouds unfold,
" From the wide vallies mantling fogs aſcend,
" And o'er the mountain's brow collected vapours blend."

XXVII.

" Thy offer like thyſelf is brave and fair,"
Cried MORTIMER; " but let a choſen few
" Of known deſert thy expedition ſhare."
With that LESTANG his ſhining faulchion drew,
Exclaiming, " To my friend and Sov'reign true,
" Be mine to ſhare his hazardous eſſay!
" Together in the ſchool of war we grew,
" Together let us duty's call obey,
" And o'er the hoſtile field united force our way."

XXVIII.

" LESTANG! my valued friend!" the Chief replied,
" Our enterprize no other aid requires
" Than thy known worth in which we all confide.
" But lo! the ſun far in the weſt retires,
" Scarcely yon hills reflect his parting fires!
" Now holds the twilight it's ambiguous reign,
" And nature with our bold attempt conſpires.
" Let us not waſte our time in converſe vain:
" Much yet remains to do ere Rouen's walls we gain."

XXIX.

He ſaid, and vaulted on his vig'rous ſteed:
Nor ardour leſs his brave aſſociate ſhew'd.
As down the height they urg'd their courſers' ſpeed,
In either boſom glory's impulſe glow'd.
HERMAN, LESTANG's Eſquire, behind them rode:
From earlieſt infancy his Lord he lov'd;
With him he left his father's calm abode,
With him the chance of war full oft had prov'd,
And o'er Judæa's clime with him intrepid rov'd.

XXX.

Still was the ſcene: in many a circling flight,
Skirting the miſt, the bat purſued his way;
And, pois'd on heavy wing, the bird of night,
As thro' the glades obſcure he ſought his prey,
Chaunted aloud his melancholy lay.
Shrouded in clouds the ſullen ev'ning clos'd,
While momentary tints of ſilv'ry grey
Athwart their veil th' aſcending moon diſclos'd:
They paſs'd, and ſtraight in ſhade the wide expanſe repos'd.

XXXI.

As when, from ſome ſecluded mountain's brow,
The lordly Falcon ſails acroſs the ſkies,
His flight he checks to view the plains below;
If chance a latent covey he deſcries,
He marks with ken aſſur'd his deſtin'd prize,
And darts with rapid pinion to the ground:
So rode the gallant Knights, their watchful eyes
On ev'ry quarter ſtill extending round,
Their ev'ry faculty in deep attention bound.

XXXII.

Not far had they advanc'd, when, tow'rds the ſide
Where it's high boughs a wood was ſeen to rear,
A form quick-glancing 'croſs the plain they 'ſpied:
A courier's gabardine he ſeem'd to wear,
And in his hand a ſturdy ſtaff to bear,
And ſwift his pace, as one on ſpeed intent.
The cautious Knights ſuſpended their career,
Gazing, while ſtill his way the ſtranger went,
And o'er the beaten path his lonely footſteps bent.

XXXIII.

Onward he paſs'd, and no obſervance took,
But ſtill with diligence his travel preſs'd,
While both the Chieftains fix'd on him their look.
At length LESTANG his warlike friend addreſs'd;
" I deem it right yon varlet to arreſt:
" No common matters, 'if I reaſon well,
" Induce him to purſue his darkling queſt;
" Let us the cauſe diſcover, and compel
" The purport of his charge his fault'ring tongue to tell.

XXXIV.

" Here let us ſtand; an enemy ſo mean
" Too poor an object for our force would make:
" Let us to HERMAN leave the taſk; I ween
" His proweſs ſoon the foeman will o'ertake."
Thus to his comrade bold he laughing ſpake.
Forthwith th' Eſquire addreſs'd him to the chace:
As near he came, the Courier 'gan to quake,
And fearfully he ran with quicken'd pace,
Oft turning back his head as HERMAN urg'd the race.

XXXV.

Soon as th' Eſquire approach'd his trembling prey,
" Caitiff," cried he, " give o'er thy fruitleſs ſpeed!
" Inſtant thy unavailing efforts ſtay!"
The Courier of his words took little heed,
But many an Ave breath'd and many a Creed,
And ſtrove his quick purſuer to outgo.
With that th' Eſquire impell'd his nimble ſteed,
And on his ſhoulders broad beſtow'd a blow,
Which check'd his courſe and on the green-ſward laid him
[low.

XXXVI.

The Chieftains, now approaching, from the ground
With heedful caution rais'd the fallen wight,
Whom yet his late miſhap appear'd t' aſtound:
Gazing around him with increas'd affright,
In piteous terms he moan'd his luckleſs plight.
Soon as he ſeem'd his ſenſes to collect,
" The purpoſe of thy journey ſtraight recite,"
LESTANG exclaim'd; " Say where doſt thou direct
" Thy ſecret way, or here thy final doom expect."

XXXVII.

He ſaid, and threat'ning wav'd his glitt'ring blade.
" Tho' ill my tongue my meaning can expreſs,"
The Courier cried, " by terror thus diſmay'd,
" Yet, ſince hard fate affords me no redreſs,
" Thus will I briefly my intent confeſs.
" By PHILIP charg'd, I haſten'd tow'rds SANCERRE,
" Commiſſion'd the illuſtrious Chief to preſs
" For inſtant march his warriors to prepare,
" And, ere to-morrow's dawn, his Monarch's toils to ſhare."

XXXVIII.

" Where does the Chieftain now his ſtation hold?"
Said REGINALD. " Forbear thy threat'ning hand,"
Replied he, " and the whole I will unfold.
" See'ſt thou where Annebaud's green ſhades expand?
" Beyond their fartheſt verge his enſigns ſtand:
" His force I know not, yet 'tis ſmall I ween,
" And for aggreſſion ill prepar'd his band;
" Nor could he well aſſiſtant troops convene,
" Were on his camp t' advance an enemy unſeen."

XXXIX.

He ſpoke, and ſought with pray'rs their wrath to charm,
And oft with tears inforc'd his pleadings vain,
The threat'ning Chieftains' vengeance to diſarm,
While they, regarding him with ſtern diſdain,
Debated how they might advantage gain
From what his fears had forc'd him to diſcloſe:
But firſt they deem'd it prudent to detain
Their captive, leſt he might alarm their foes,
And their advent'rous plan inſtruct them to oppoſe.

XL.

Soon as their purpoſe HERMAN underſtood,
He led his pris'ner tow'rds a ſturdy oak,
Which tower'd within the precincts of the wood;
Then from his ſteed a cord ſufficient took,
And ſtraightly bound him: with diſmay he ſhook,
And much he pray'd, and much the Chiefs beſought
That they with pity on his ſtate would look.
His ſupplication vain they heeded nought,
Engroſs'd by graver cares of what might yet be wrought.

XLI.

Around them night array'd in ſhadows reign'd,
And oft, amid th' impenetrable ſhade,
The interlacing boughs their courſe detain'd:
Yet reſolutely they their progreſs made,
And, gaining now a more expanded glade,
Commun'd on what they recently had heard.
Checking his ſteed at length, LESTANG thus ſaid:
" Should perils, when our duty calls, be fear'd?
" Let us but dare the feat, and half our doubts are clear'd.

XLII.

" The hour of midnight is not yet at hand,
" And from us now SANCERRE cannot be far.
" If warily our daring ſcheme be plann'd,
" Him from to-morrow's junction we may bar,
" And thus the aid which PHILIP hopes may mar.
" Should we ſucceed, but little time we loſe,
" And ſhould we fall, 'tis but the chance of war.
" Methinks, were we the occaſion to refuſe,
" Our comrades might our want of enterprize accuſe."

XLIII.

" Great is the hazard," REGINALD rejoin'd,
" But come what will, ſince honour prompts the deed,
" In me a true aſſociate ſhall you find."
He ſaid. Each Chieftain ſpurr'd his gen'rous ſteed,
And thro' the foreſt with increaſing ſpeed,
Heedleſs of all impediments, advanc'd.
It's verge attain'd, at diſtance o'er the mead
Some ſcatter'd lights they ſaw, which feebly glanc'd,
And thro' the void obſcure ſhort ſcintillations lanc'd.

XLIV.

" There, there!" exclaim'd LESTANG, " our foe behold!
" Let us their careleſs centinels ſurprize—"
" Suſpend," cried REGINALD, " your purpoſe bold;
" Tho' preſent riſk the valiant heart defies,
" Raſhneſs alone precaution will deſpiſe.
" Let HERMAN tow'rds their camp in ſilence go:
" His juſt report will aid us to deviſe,
" How beſt our efforts may annoy the foe,
" And where with moſt effect may fall our vengeful blow."

XLV.

He ſaid. Th' Eſquire obey'd. Within the wood,
Awaiting his return, the warlike pair
In mute and anxious expectation ſtood.
But ſoon his welcome preſence eas'd their care.
" Chieftains!" he cried, " intelligence I bear,
" Which ſeems propitious to your daring hope:
" The foe, of all aggreſſion unaware,
" And unprepar'd with your aſſault to cope,
" May to your vengeance full afford unbounded ſcope.

XLVI.

" When to their ſmall encampment I drew near,
" Cloſe to it's rampart I contriv'd to creep.
" Stillneſs prevail'd: no voices could I hear,
" No ſentinels appear'd their watch to keep:
" Some waning torches, thro' the darkneſs deep
" Shedding a glimm'ring light, ſuffic'd to ſhew
" The warriors ſcatter'd and oppreſs'd by ſleep,
" Their ſenſes ſo abſorb'd, they ſcarce would know,
" When fate arriv'd, whence came it's overwhelming blow."

XLVII.

Their plan the Chieftains ſoon arrang'd, and ſtraight
Each, from his ſteed deſcending, gave the rein,
To HERMAN's hand, and bad him near await.
As when, on torrid Barca's ſandy plain,
A Lion ſcents the Antelope's throng'd train,
Swiftly he ruſhes on his timid prey,
With bloody feaſt the champaign parch'd to ſtain:
So o'er the heath the Knights purſued their way,
Inſenſible to fear, and eager for the fray.

XLVIII.

Approaching, all in ſilence wrapt they found;
The half-expiring torches ſcarcely gleam'd,
While here and there, extended on the ground,
Of paſt-gone toils the ſlumb'ring warriors dream'd.
Soon with their gore the Chieftains' faulchions ſtream'd:
Some fell unconſcious of their fatal doom,
Some deeply groan'd, ſome lamentably ſcream'd:
While death exulting hover'd in the gloom,
Wav'd his ill-omen'd arm, and ſhook his threat'ning plume.

XLIX.

Undaunted they purſued their vengeful courſe:
As havock and diſmay around they ſhed,
Full many a Chieftain ſank beneath their force,
And, undiſtinguiſh'd 'mid th' inglorious dead,
And unreveng'd, his martial ſpirit fled.
Loud exclamations now, with horror fraught,
Roſe thro' the camp, and new confuſion ſpread.
They reach'd SANCERRE: his weapon ſtraight he caught,
And, guided by the ſound, the ſcene of carnage ſought.

L.

As on he ruſh'd, from the deep-mantling cloud,
Which had obſcur'd her orb, the Queen of Night
Burſt forth: all Heav'n with new-born radiance glow'd,
The plains and woods confeſs'd her influence bright,
And the wide landſcape ſhone with ſilv'ry light.
With mingled rage and grief SANCERRE beheld
His comrades ſlain, or in unſeemly flight
Thro' ev'ry quarter of the field impell'd,
While the confed'rate Knights the tide of ſlaughter ſwell'd.

LI.

As when of hinds a weak and tim'rous herd,
By ſhepherd dogs alarm'd, in terror flies,
The well-horn'd ſtag, by gen'rous feelings ſtirr'd,
While vengeance glances from his ſparkling eyes,
Intrepidly th' aggreſſors rude defies;
So fill'd with indignation on he came:
" Whence this alarm, whence," cried he, " this ſurpriſe?
" Ceaſe your baſe flight, nor thus conſign to ſhame
" By cowardice your own and your commander's fame!"

LII.

Thus ſaid he. Fruitleſs prov'd his bold eſſay:
Yet ſtill he fought their paſſage to arreſt,
When, as around he look'd, the moon's bright ray
Glancing diſclos'd LESTANG's high-poliſh'd creſt,
As rapidly he urg'd his bloody queſt,
And 'neath his arm the flying recreants bow'd.
Diſdain and fury fir'd the Chieftain's breaſt;
He darted forward thro' the trembling croud,
And, his keen faulchion waving, thus exclaim'd aloud.

LIII.

" Whoe'er thou art, whoſe deſolating hand
" Has forc'd yon daſtards foully to retreat,
" Behold! th' avenger of my hoſt I ſtand:
" SANCERRE himſelf is here thy rage to meet!"
" None but thyſelf was wanting to compleat
" My triumph," cried LESTANG: " ſoon ſhalt thou view
" How well my weapon ſhall thy puiſſance greet!"
He ſaid, and ſpurning the ignoble crew,
O'er bleeding heaps of ſlain to meet SANCERRE he flew.

LIV.

Brief, tho' tremendous, prov'd their ſtern appeal.
LESTANG his ſword with bold aſſurance heav'd,
And ſtruck his foe's broad ſhield: the ſounding ſteel,
True to it's truſt, the rude aſſault receiv'd,
And from the threat'ned harm it's lord repriev'd.
SANCERRE, recov'ring from th' aggreſſion rude,
With better aim his dread intent atchiev'd;
LESTANG, his helmet cruſh'd, and bath'd in blood,
Stagger'd, while from his mouth diſtill'd a crimſon'd flood.

LV.

Again the Chieftain ſtruck, nor ſtruck in vain:
His pond'rous blade fell heavy, and impell'd
The fainting warrior headlong on the plain.
With exultation now his boſom ſwell'd,
When REGINALD, who ſtill with force unquell'd
O'er the red field the flying ſquadron drave,
The wayward fortunes of his friend beheld.
Tow'rds him he ruſh'd, the menac'd wrath to brave,
And from impending fate his comrade bold to ſave.

LVI.

"Touch not his valued life!" he loudly cried;
"By one who oft thy proweſs has ſurvey'd
"Art thou, preſumptuous Chieftain! now defied!"
He ſaid, and, whirling round his vengeful blade,
On his proud helm with vig'rous onſet laid;
But, ere he could his fierce aſſault repeat,
SANCERRE his victim left, and undiſmay'd
His new aſſailant boldly turn'd to meet:
Nor ſtay'd he long his foe with manly force to greet.

LVII.

Awhile well-balanc'd victory held the ſcale,
And either Knight to gain her ſuffrage ſought:
But REGINALD was deſtin'd to prevail.
With ſuch reſiſtleſs energy he wrought,
That to the ground the Gallic Chief he brought.
Bleeding he ſank, to Heav'n his ſpirit flew.
But now, with ſhame and deep reſentment fraught
At ſight of his defeat, the daſtard crew
Around the Engliſh Knight with fell intention drew.

LVIII.

As when baſe village curs preſume t' attack
A gen'rous maſtiff, he with proud diſdain
Eyes them, nor condeſcends his pace to ſlack;
But, ſhould ſome champion of th' ignoble train
Dare with rude gripe his paſſage to reſtrain,
His potent fangs the raſh aggreſſor rend:
So, tho' around him peal'd the foes amain,
Nought did the Chief to their aſſault attend,
Alone engroſs'd by care to aid his bleeding friend.

LIX.

In vain t' arouſe him with his voice he tried;
But, raiſing him with caution from the ground,
Gently his batter'd helmet he untied,
And the red current wiping from his wound,
Acroſs his head his ſcarf embroider'd bound.
Meantime, the foe from ev'ry quarter ruſh'd:
Like ſummer gnats they buzz'd and teaz'd around,
While their rude ſwarms contemptuouſly he bruſh'd,
Their murm'rings marr'd, and oft their feeble corſelets
[cruſh'd.

LX.

They ſtill, in numbers confident, advanc'd,
While REGINALD, to virtuous friendſhip true,
Supporting tenderly LESTANG entranc'd,
As from the ſcene of carnage he withdrew,
Thoſe who moſt boldly onward preſs'd o'erthrew.
As thus incumber'd he ſmall progreſs made,
Seizing his horn, a pow'rful blaſt he blew.
The well-known ſignal HERMAN ſtraight obey'd,
And haſtily came on the gallant pair to aid.

LXI.

Soon as he ſaw his faint and bleeding lord,
His boſom ſwell'd with vengeance and deſpair,
And forth inſtinctively he drew his ſword.
" Thy brave attempt," cried REGINALD, " forbear:
" My friend's protection be it thine to ſhare,
" While our preſumptuous foes by me are fac'd."
Then lifting up LESTANG, with tender care
Him on his courſer properly he plac'd,
And left him to th' Eſquire, who cloſely him embrac'd.

LXII.

When he perceiv'd him ſafe from further harm,
At the baſe herd with double rage he drove:
They fled diſpers'd before his pow'rful arm,
Some imprecating ſuccour from above,
Some doom'd the terrors of his wrath to prove.
As, when a ſtorm its ravages extends,
Stript are the leafy honours of the grove,
It's far-extending boughs the tempeſt rends,
And thro' it's inmoſt ſhades the ſtricken foreſt bends:

LXIII.

So REGINALD amid the trembling band
Spread wide deſtruction, and with vengeful force
Prov'd the aſcendance of his vig'rous hand.
But now no more were heard their outcries hoarſe;
Thro' ſtreams of gore, o'er many a mangled corſe,
The Chief return'd, and, on his vig'rous ſteed
Vaulting, tow'rds Rouen's walls reſum'd his courſe.
Yet rode he not with his accuſtom'd ſpeed,
Leſt his companion's wound, ill ſtaunch'd, again ſhould [bleed.

LXIV.

Ere he the well-known ramparts reach'd, the moon,
Again involv'd in clouds whoſe dark veil ſwept
Acroſs her waning orb, had reach'd her noon.
But, tho' in reſt ſurrounding nature ſlept,
His watchful vigils England's Monarch kept.
To him the Chief was anxious to repair;
Yet firſt he tried to find ſome leech adept,
Who, ſkill'd in all HYGEIA's precepts rare,
Might for his ſuff'ring friend employ his healing care.

LXV.

This pious duty well perform'd, in haſte
He ſought the King, and to his private ear
The movements of the Gallic army trac'd.
" Their hoſtile purpoſe not unpleas'd I hear,"
The Monarch anſwer'd; " let them but appear,
" And Engliſh valour ſhall their preſence greet.
" But night grows old, and morning now is near:
" Send forth to ſummon all our Chiefs to meet,
" On what may beſt behove our exigence to treat."

LXVI.

Soon as his will was known the Peers obey'd.
When all aſſembled in attention ſat,
And ev'ry eye an earneſt wiſh diſplay'd
To learn the object of their grave debate,
The King began ſuccinctly to narrate
What REGINALD had told, and how the foes
Their might around conven'd, when from the gate,
With ſudden burſt diſturbing night's repoſe,
A trumpet's piercing notes, repeated thrice, aroſe.

LXVII.

" BAYNTUN! go forth and learn," exclaim'd the King,
" What warlike ſummons thus the ſtill air rends,
" And who thus hails us information bring."
He went. Returning ſoon, " MOUNTJOY attends,"
He cried, " and thus his humble rev'rence ſends.
" Charg'd by the Gallic Monarch to declare
" A weighty truſt, his courſe he hither bends:
" He ſays his miſſion no delay will bear,
" And from your courteſy expects reception fair."

LXVIII.

" Bid him forthwith approach, and ſay we know,"
Replied the King, " what rights his functions claim:
" Let him the purport of his miſſion ſhew."
Eſcorted as his character became,
He thus advancing ſaid: " MOUNTJOY my name,
" By PHILIP charg'd of what concerns the weal
" Of either ſtate his pleaſure to proclaim,
" And, in this noble preſence, to reveal
" A propoſition fram'd your enmities to heal.

LXIX.

" Thus ſpeaks my King. Too long has ruthleſs war,
" With ſavage ſway and domination wild,
" Prevail'd the face of Normandy to mar.
" Her vine-clad hills, her vales where plenty ſmil'd,
" Her bleſt retreats by ſlaughter are defil'd:
" No more the peaſant at returning eve
" Hails his chaſte ſpouſe or claſps his darling child,
" The village nymphs no more the light dance weave,
" No more at nature's call their panting boſoms heave.

LXX.

" Deſirous the ſtern conteſt to conclude,
" He thus prefers the quarrel to decide,
" And at a ſtroke to end the fatal feud.
" Let the two Monarchs name, on either ſide,
" Five hardy Knights of ſkill and valour tried,
" And let them ſwear, whate'er th' event may be,
" By this fair ordeal truly to abide.
" Thus ſhall your fates with fortune's will agree,
" And thus from further ills Normannia ſhall be free."

LXXI.

" MOUNTJOY! the purport of thy miſſion high,"
Return'd the King, " diſcreetly haſt thou ſaid;
" Now lend attention while I thus reply.
" Heav'n knows, no hope from mad ambition bred
" Myſelf, or thoſe who grace my cauſe, has led
" In theſe domains the Gallic King to ſeek.
" If here in hoſtile guiſe our banners ſpread,
" The fault is his, who dar'd his oaths to break,
" And on theſe injur'd plains his foul revenge to wreak.

LXXII.

" On that Great Pow'r, who all my counſels knows,
" To whom my inmoſt purpoſe is reveal'd,
" With confidence unſhaken I repoſe.
" By open force provok'd and fraud conceal'd,
" I ſtand prepar'd upon the tented field
" To meet th' invader with aggreſſion rude:
" Yet rather would I from deſtruction ſhield
" The unoffending, and prevent the flood
" Of, what I value moſt, my brave companions' blood.

LXXIII.

" I therefore with his fair propoſal cloſe,
" Provided that of either gallant band
" We who conduct the war a part compoſe.
" Then, when we, King to King, and hand to hand,
" Our prize a realm, in oppoſition ſtand,
" When on our faulchions, oft in battle tried,
" Shall hang the fortunes of this ſuff'ring land,
" Let arbitrating Heav'n our fates decide,
" And, as our cauſe is good, our arms to victory guide!"

LXXIV.

" No!" cried MOUNTJOY, as he with rev'rence bent,
" Such are not PHILIP's terms. Thus I preſume
" In other guiſe to ſpeak his mild intent.
" Much he laments that war's fell chance ſhould doom
" Such worth chivalric to an early tomb;
" Much it concerns him that theſe warriors brave,
" Vig'rous and yet in all their youthful bloom,
" Bleſt with each gift which bounteous nature gave,
" Should ruſh to certain death and idly court a grave.

LXXV.

" He, tho' in numbers confident, inclines
" For mercy's ſake his triumphs to forego,
" And, mov'd by pity, conqueſt's meed reſigns.
" He wills that all his proffer'd boon ſhould know.
" Anxious to terminate this ſcene of woe,
" He aſks if from this too long harraſs'd ſhore
" You will on fair and juſt conditions go;
" If you prefer to tempt your fate once more,
" Or, as he wiſhes, peace and friendſhip to reſtore.

LXXVI.

" If ſuch your choice, abandon Fecan's tow'rs:
" Surrender all your pris'ners to his hand:
" Without delay embark your warlike pow'rs;
" Fully conceding to my King's command
" What now he holds in this conteſted land.
" On theſe mild terms, he pledges his conſent
" To your free paſſage from the Norman ſtrand.
" I wait to know if war be your intent,
" Or if returning peace ſhall further ills prevent."

LXXVII.

He ſaid. Diſdain in ev'ry breaſt awoke,
Vengeance illumin'd ev'ry warrior's face,
And thro' their ranks indignant clamours broke:
But to reſpect their kindling rage gave place,
As, turning tow'rds them, with his 'cuſtom'd grace
RICHARD addreſs'd them. " Friends! awhile forbear;
" Full well your gen'ral ſentiment I trace:
" Thus let my voice our common will declare,
" Then, as our cauſe becomes, for inſtant march prepare.

LXXVIII.

" MOUNTJOY! thy proffers we have heard: receive
" With fit attention our reſolv'd reply.
" Whate'er our fate, let not your King believe
" That Engliſhmen, when honour calls, will fly,
" Or that they baſely will ſubmit to buy
" By ſcandalous conceſſions a retreat.
" Tell him we know to conquer or to die.
" Let him be ſilent, 'till, by our defeat,
" A title he acquire his inſults to repeat.

LXXIX.

" Thinks he that England's Monarch, loſt to fame,
" His Heav'n-committed charge ſo little knows,
" As thus to ſtamp his country's cauſe with ſhame?
" Could he with ſuch degrading offers cloſe,
" Tell him, each drop of gen'rous blood which flows
" In Engliſh veins indignantly would burn,
" And nerve their ſouls ſuch treaſon to oppoſe!
" With this reply to Gallia's King return:
" Tell him his proffer baſe with proud contempt we ſpurn!"

LXXX.

As thus the King with manly firmneſs ſpoke,
The Chieftains ſilent ſtood in thought profound:
But, when he ended, thro' the chamber broke
Shouts of applauſe; exulting cries around
Roſe high, and made the vaulted hall reſound.
" Since your election is for war's debate,"
MOUNTJOY departing cried, " Oh King renown'd!
" I go my fruitleſs miſſion to narrate,
" Yet with reſpect impreſs'd, and ſorrowing for your fate."

LXXXI.

" Then," cried the King, " to-morrow's dread appeal
" The juſtice of our enterpriſe ſhall ſhew,
" And Heav'n's all-pow'rful will our doom ſhall ſeal.
" Tell your falſe Sov'reign his deſigns we know,
" And that, when morning's earlieſt tints ſhall glow,
" In equal field to meet him we prepare.
" Now to your King return: yet, ere you go,
" Our hoſpitality and largeſs ſhare;
" Then, with what ſpeed you may, our ſtern defiance bear."

LXXXII.

He ſaid. While all their zeal and hopes expreſs'd,
MOUNTJOY with low obeiſance left the hall,
And RICHARD thus th' impatient Peers addreſs'd.
" Th' impending hour alike imports us all:
" On all alike imperious duties call.
" Let ev'ry Chief prepare his bold array,
" At early dawn to meet inſulting Gaul.
" Meantime, ere yet our banners we diſplay,
" The dictates of my ſoul I haſten to obey."

LXXXIII.

Thus ſaying, from the hall he paſs'd in haſte,
Attended only by the brave BLONDEL.
As the extending galleries he trac'd,
" Hard is th' attempt," exclaim'd he, " to repel
" Feelings on which the heart delights to dwell:
" Yet this ungracious leſſon muſt we learn.
" To-morrow's fortunes Heav'n alone can tell;
" We may prevail, or never may return,
" Yet honour bids us think ourſelves our leaſt concern.

LXXXIV.

" Still, ere we go one ſacrifice remains:
" To thoſe whom moſt we love to bid adieu,
" To witneſs all the agonizing pains
" Of noble hearts warm'd with attachment true:
" Doom'd haply ne'er thoſe graces to review—
" But let us theſe ſoul-rending thoughts diſmiſs!
" The moments we can call our own are few:
" Theſe let us wiſely conſecrate to bliſs,
" And leave on beauty's lips our laſt reluctant kiſs!"

LXXXV.

The chamber ent'ring, England's Queen they view'd,
Who with the Cyprian Maid, tho' wan'd the night,
The pleaſing labours of her web purſued.
There trac'd they Cæſarea's glorious fight,
And many a champion brave, and many a knight
Seem'd there again his puiſſant arm to wield:
Again was ſeen the Saracenic flight,
BLONDEL again diſplay'd his ſuccouring ſhield,
And RICHARD there again ſhone maſter of the field.

LXXXVI.

Surpriz'd they left their half-unfiniſh'd toil,
And BERENGARIA, haſt'ning tow'rds the King,
Greeted his preſence with a heav'nly ſmile.
" Whate'er," ſhe cried, " my love may hither bring,
" He finds us here from time's oblivious wing
" Employ'd to ſave the wonders of his hand.
" While poetry thy great exploits ſhall ſing,
" And RICHARD'S worth by hiſtory ſhall be ſcann'd,
" By us, more humbly wrought, ſhall they recorded ſtand."

LXXXVII.

" Thou know'ſt," replied he, " that no ampler praiſe
" Than thy approval my fond ſoul requires
" Tow'rds fair renown it's energies to raiſe.
" For thee my heart beats high with pure deſires,
" Thy mild attractive grace my boſom fires
" With pure attachment and congenial love.
" Yet wayward fate againſt our joys conſpires:
" Reſiſtleſs duty bids me hence remove,
" Again for England's ſake the chance of war to prove."

LXXXVIII.

" Ah! what," exclaim'd ſhe, "now provókes thee hence!
" Muſt then my fond, too-ſuſceptible heart
" Be doom'd again to anguiſh and ſuſpenſe?
" Oh death! in pity here infix thy dart;
" Strike deep, and eaſe at once my tort'ring ſmart!
" Are there no means to ward the threat'ned blow?
" Muſt we again, when ſcarce united, part?
" Ah! muſt I ſtill augmented torments know,
" In wretchedneſs ſupreme, ſublime in lengthen'd woe!"

LXXXIX.

Weeping ſhe ſpoke, and tore her auburn hair,
Then, with a ſigh which ſeem'd her heart to break,
She ſank, a ſilent image of deſpair.
Meantime, while tears ſuffus'd her blooming cheek,
Too much oppreſs'd by warring thoughts to ſpeak,
Fair CHARICLÆA ſat. She rais'd her head,
And, ſtruggling to o'ercome the feelings weak
Which in her boſom ſentiment had bred,
Tow'rds the ſad Queen advanc'd, and thus with firmneſs ſaid.

XC.

" Oh BERENGARIA! who ſo oft haſt brought
" Sweet conſolation to my troubled ſoul,
" Whoſe voice, with wiſdom's choiceſt precepts fraught,
" O'er my afflicted boſom oft has ſtole,
" And prov'd it's pow'r my ſorrows to conſole,
" Let now thy native fortitude be ſeen.
" Superior duties ſhould thy grief controul:
" They bid thee danger meet with front ſerene,
" As RICHARD's ſpouſe becomes, and England's high-born [Queen.

XCI.

" Exultingly the glorious truth I prove,
" And grateful bow to Heav'n, which deign'd to grace
" My favour'd fortunes with a hero's love.
" What tho' thro' long antiquity I trace
" Th' imperial honours of my vaunted race!
" The proud diſtinction which his choice confers
" Beyond all rank or anceſtry I place:
" To his deſert my memory oft recurs,
" And all that dignifies the ſoul to action ſtirs."

XCII.

She ſaid. BLONDEL entranc'd in wonder gaz'd,
And thus exclaim'd, as falling at her feet
Her hand enraptur'd to his lips he rais'd:
" Oh firſt of women! Excellence compleat!
" Ne'er may BLONDEL thy cheriſh'd hope defeat!
" By future action ſhall my truth be known;
" My heart with thee ſhall ſtill in concord beat,
" When glory and ambitious hope are flown,
" And when immortal love ſhall faithful prove alone!"

XCIII.

" There ſpoke the lover and the hero too,"
The Maid replied: " Proceed, illuſtrious youth!
" Bravely the foes of England to purſue.
" If CHARICLÆA's love thy toils can ſmooth,
" If her affection pure thy cares can ſooth,
" Let thy endowments fully be reveal'd:
" Confiding in thy conſtancy and truth,
" My hand thy ſword ſhall gird, ſhall rear thy ſhield,
" And my approving voice ſhall urge thee to the field."

XCIV.

Then turning to the Queen, " Should we repine,"
She cried, " if honour with reſiſtleſs call
" Compel us thoſe we value to reſign?
" Does it become us miſery to foreſtal,
" Or picture woes our ſenſes to appal?
" On Heav'n's o'er-watching providence reflect,
" Without whoſe word the ſparrow cannot fall:
" Think but on this, and then thy force collect
" To prop thy weaken'd mind, thy reaſon to direct.

XCV.

" Nay, weep not, lovely friend! I too could weep,
" But, ſpite of all my tears, the Pow'r above,
" Who rules our fate, his fix'd reſolve would keep.
" He, doubtleſs our imperfect hearts to prove,
" Will oft our tranſitory joys remove:
" 'Tis he our heroes' ardour who has fir'd;
" He will return them, conſtant to our love
" And bleſt with all to which their ſouls aſpir'd,
" To offer at our feet the meed by worth acquir'd."

XCVI.

" Could I ſuch pleaſing perſpectives diſcern,"
Replied the Queen, " I might ſhort ſorrows brave:
" But they, alas! may never more return!"
" If the dark Cypreſs o'er their tomb ſhould wave,"
Cried ſhe, " what nobler trophy can they have,
" Than the warm tear which drops from beauty's eye?
" Shall we not meet again beyond the grave?
" Shall not our mingling ſouls embrace, and fly
" 'Midſt angel choirs to reap a bleſt eternity?"

XCVII.

Not leſs, when on the ſuff'ring Martyr's head
From op'ning Heav'n the holy Spirit fell,
O'er his mov'd ſoul celeſtial balm it ſhed,
Than wrought her words affliction to diſpel.
With cheering hope they felt their boſoms ſwell:
In mutual converſe and endearments chaſte,
As if reſolv'd intruſive doubt to quell,
The ſhort reprieve which time allow'd they paſs'd,
Entranc'd in pure delight too exquiſite to laſt.

XCVIII.

For now the earlieſt tint of morning beam'd,
And o'er the ſky, in night's dark veil yet bound,
A grey effulgence from th' horizon ſtream'd:
The ſhouts of paſſing troops were heard around,
And ſhrill aroſe the trumpet's martial ſound.
" Farewell," cried RICHARD, " beſt belov'd, adieu!
" Soon may we meet by fame and victory crown'd!
" By Heav'n ſupported, and inſpir'd by you,
" Our ſwords ſhall make the foe his daring inſults rue!"

END OF BOOK XVII.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Engagement between the Engliſh and French armies---Philip, wounded by Richard, is conveyed to Gaalor---Complete defeat of the French---Interview between Richard and Philip---Peace---Concluſion.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

BOOK XVIII.

I.

NOW broke the day, and from St. James's height
The miſts which rob'd it's rugged brow unroll'd,
While o'er the vallies linger'd yet the night,
And vap'ry dews in domination cold
The widely-ſpreading landſcape ſeem'd t' infold:
Thro' them the tow'ring ſpire and mantling wood
Now roſe; now, ſtreaming with celeſtial gold,
The ſun pour'd forth his animating flood,
And all the glorious ſcene array'd in ſplendour ſtood.

II.

Throughout the crouded ſtreets with eager haſte
The warlike youth in all directions preſs'd,
And tow'rds the gate their march obſervant trac'd:
Far gleam'd each helm, high wav'd each plumed creſt,
And loudly ſpoke each Chieftain his beheſt;
The drums and trumpets join'd their cheering ſound,
And, proudly conſcious of their daring queſt,
The lordly chargers, as they ſcour'd around,
Neighing, their arch'd necks rear'd, and ſhook the duſty [ground.

III.

RICHARD meantime, attended by BLONDEL,
His viſor clos'd, his temper'd cuiraſs brac'd,
While ARTHUR's faulchion from his baldrick fell,
And his right hand a ſpear of tough aſh grac'd.
A golden coronet his helm encas'd,
O'er which a heron's plume was ſeen to float,
Shad'wing the gems with which it was enchas'd.
O'er his bright armour hung a rich ſurcoat,
With England's bearings charg'd his ſtation to denote.

IV.

Soon as he learn'd that on th' appointed field
The Chiefs their various armaments had claſs'd,
He breath'd a pray'r, and graſp'd his ample ſhield.
As to the portal he advanc'd, the laſt
Of his well-order'd troops the barrier paſs'd.
He leap'd upon his ſteed, and thro' the gate
To join th' aſſembling force proceeded faſt,
Confiding in his cauſe, reſign'd to fate,
And eager to conclude the long-provok'd debate.

V.

Ere long, attended by his knightly band,
He join'd his hoſt, and, as in order cloſe
His gallant legions ſtood, with out-ſtretch'd hand
Thus he addreſs'd them. "Comrades! ſee your foes:
"Think on the duty which a ſoldier owes
"To Heav'n, his country, and his cheriſh'd fame.
"The heart, which with a patriot's ardour glows,
"Will prove the force of it's inſpiring flame,
"And by exertions new will freſh diſtinction claim.

VI.

" If danger threaten, I the riſk partake;
" If toils await ye, I the labour ſhare:
" My lov'd companions ne'er will I forſake.
" Should ye be wounded, mine ſhall be the care
" All that may eaſe your ſuff'rings to prepare:
" Should ye ſurvive, and fame your deeds ſhould grace,
" Henceforth each yeoman ſhall coat-armour bear,
" Shall o'er his gate his blazon'd 'ſcutcheon place,
" And prove the founder proud of an ennobled race.

VII.

" Then live with me, your country's truſt and pride,
" Or die with me, to honour's dictates true:
" My choice is made, whatever may betide,
" I live to glory, or I die with you.
" But, ere our hearts' bold dictates we purſue,
" Let us, with zealous confidence impreſs'd,
" Our humble ſuit to providence renew:
" Then let each warrior bravely rear his creſt,
" Truſt in th' Almighty's aid, and leave to fate the reſt."

VIII.

While England's bands their pious King obey'd,
And pure devotion's flame their boſoms caught,
PHILIP within Gaalor's fortreſs ſtay'd.
A prey to anxious and diſtracting thought,
Succeſſive plans and ſtratagems he wrought;
And, tho' of BELIAL's potent aid depriv'd,
His working fancy new reſources ſought,
And freſh arrangements craftily contriv'd,
From which a fleeting ray of comfort he deriv'd.

IX.

Meantime, array'd the Gallic legions ſtood,
While o'er the plain, which either hoſt between
Deſcended gently tow'rds Rapaume's clear flood,
The movements of the Engliſh bands were ſeen.
The gallant Chiefs delay'd not to convene.
To ſeek the preſence of their King they choſe
Experienc'd NANTEUIL and renown'd SARGINES,
Charg'd to requeſt he would his plans diſcloſe,
And at their head appear to lead them 'gainſt their foes.

X.

They to Gaalor haſt'ning, to the Prince
Their ſuit reveal'd, and urg'd him to repair
To his impatient line, and there evince
What his great ſoul in peril's hour could dare.
He, ſtill engroſs'd by heart-corroding care,
Ill heed'd their preſence and entreaties ſtrong:
Yet ſtill renew'd they their perſuaſions fair,
Recall'd the duties which to Kings belong,
And preſs'd him not himſelf and country thus to wrong.

XI.

" Already, Sire! in burniſh'd ſteel array'd
" RICHARD," exclaim'd SARGINES, " his forces leads:
" On high his bearſful banner is diſplay'd;
" Againſt our hoſt he daringly proceeds,
" And, not unmindful of his former deeds,
" By new exertions ſtrives new wreaths to gain.
" He no perſuaſions, no intreaties, needs;
" His abſence does not England's zeal reſtrain,
" He cheers his comrades' toils, and gives their fury rein."

XII.

" If," ſaid the King, " I have remark'd aright,
" Thy ſpeech a ſtrange propenſity diſplays
" My rival's hated merits to recite,
" And, at my coſt, invidiouſly to raiſe
" For England's Prince an edifice of praiſe.
" I would not wiſh a judgment falſe to make;
" But, if thy tongue thy mind's intent betrays,
" 'Twere better far thy Monarch to forſake,
" And with his deadlieſt foe an open part to take."

XIII.

" Heav'ns and ye ſacred Pow'rs!" the Chieftain cried,
" Are thus my loyalty and well-earn'd fame
" By him for whom my blood was ſhed belied!
" Prince! had a man of leſs illuſtrious name
" At my allegiance thus preſum'd to aim,
" My biting ſword ere this had pierc'd his breaſt.
" Farewell! I go to clear myſelf from ſhame:
" When next we meet, my worth ſhall be confeſs'd,
" Or low on earth ſhall lie my now diſhonour'd creſt!"

XIV.

Thus ſaying, from Gaalor's tow'rs he went,
And to the army haſtily repair'd,
Indignant and on deſp'rate purpoſe bent.
PHILIP, who nought for his endurance car'd,
His orders iſſued and his arms prepar'd;
Then to NANTEUIL, who in amazement loſt
His friend's reſentment and affliction ſhar'd,
" Come on," he cried, " now forward to the hoſt,
" And let yon madman try to realize his boaſt."

XV.

" Sire!" ſaid NANTEUIL, " a man whoſe high renown
" All Europe owns, it ſuits not thus to call.
" Than him none better will ſupport your crown:
" No danger can his valiant heart appal;
" He will or honour gain or greatly fall."
" Let him the fulſome praiſes of my foe,
" Which now he dares promulgate, firſt recal,
" Then," ſaid the King, " I may more def'rence ſhew:
" Now to the crouded field with other thoughts I go."

XVI.

Acroſs the plain his courſer he impell'd,
Whoſe vig'rous efforts ſoon the Monarch brought
To where the Chiefs their anxious council held.
Meantime NANTEUIL his valiant comrade ſought,
Who, rack'd with care, their preſence heeded nought,
But ſeem'd engag'd ſome dread intent to ſcan,
While heav'd his boſom with tumultuous thought,
And o'er his mind ſharp recollections ran.
Him brave NANTEUIL approach'd, and mildly thus began.

XVII.

" Not leſs ſeverely than yourſelf I feel
" Our King's unjuſt reproach: yet ſtill, my friend!
" When honour and our country make appeal,
" We ſhould to their ſuperior claims attend.
" On our exertions Gallia's hopes depend.
" Let not thy private feelings intervene,
" T' abate the zeal which ſhould her cauſe defend:
" Forget the inſults offer'd to SARGINES,
" And, as becomes thee, firſt in glory's ranks be ſeen."

XVIII.

As thus he ſaid, SARGINES with firm aſpect
Surveying him replied: " Too well I know
" Honour's fair claim my duty to neglect.
" My heart for France ſhall never ceaſe to glow,
" For her my blood ſhall ever freely flow;
" Unbiaſs'd by reſentment or diſguſt,
" In her defence I only aſk to ſhew,
" That, true and faithful to her ſacred truſt,
" Tho' injur'd by my King, to her I ſtill am juſt.

XIX.

" Yet, not unmindful of my Sov'reign's cauſe,
" A cauſe to ev'ry gallant Frenchman dear,
" To guard his head SARGINES ſhall never pauſe.
" Then may my truth and loyalty appear!
" But ſee! our foes aloft their ſtandards rear:
" Mark their cloſe ranks, their menacing array,
" Their pealing hymns of warm devotion hear.
" Honour and duty call us hence away,
" Urge us to meet our fate, and chide our long delay!"

XX.

He ſaid, and haſt'ning tow'rds the ſpreading line,
As if forgetful of his recent ſlight,
Sought with NANTEUIL th' aſſembled Chiefs to join,
Where PHILIP, as he rang'd his warlike might,
Rode thro' their ranks and ſtirr'd them to the fight.
No longer now he ſeem'd by doubts oppreſs'd,
But, as if hope with inſpiration light
And fancied triumphs viſited his breaſt,
Thus, as along he paſs'd, his legions he addreſs'd.

XXI.

" Warriors! prepare to meet th' eventful hour:
" Unite yon vaunting armaments to chaſe,
" Who now ſo ſturdily defy our pow'r.
" Like high-born courſers panting for the race,
" Fearleſs of peril, emulouſly trace
" The path which leads to conqueſt and renown,
" And with immortal palms your efforts grace:
" Tho' dangers menace, and tho' fortune frown,
" Follow where glory leads, and win her deathleſs crown.

XXII.

" I hail your mounting ardour: give it room,
" Nor check it 'till proud Rouen's ramparts yield,
" 'Till Gallic proweſs ſtamp your foeman's doom!
" What tho' yon bands their threat'ning faulchions wield?
" Undaunted meet them on the hoſtile field,
" Invite the conteſt, and their views foreſtal!
" Be now th' unrival'd worth of France reveal'd:
" Wave high your ſwords, aloud St. DENIS call,
" Aſſert your country's fame, or in her ſervice fall!"

XXIII.

As thus the Monarch ſpoke, around burſt forth
Shouts of wild tranſport: ev'ry valiant Peer
Rejoic'd that now the trial of his worth
And the bright harveſt of renown were near.
Each, as he rear'd his blade and pois'd his ſpear,
No more the ardour of his troop reſtrain'd,
But bad them tow'rds Rapaume their ſwift march ſteer,
Which now the Engliſh bands had almoſt gain'd.
As either line advanc'd, ſuſpenſe appalling reign'd.

XXIV.

Thus, when in air approaching tempeſts brood,
Huſh'd are old ocean's billows, and in ſleep
Wrapt are the blaſts which plough'd it's ſurface rude:
Soon with reſiſtleſs violence they ſweep,
And, from the caverns of the foaming deep,
Tear the wild waves in mountains to the ſky;
The rocks re-echo from their baſes ſteep,
Amid the gloom quick-glancing light'nings fly,
And thunders roll around, and drown the ſeaman's cry.

XXV.

VIEUPONT, to whom the guidance of his van
The Gallic King had giv'n, in order cloſe
His archers led, and firſt the fight began.
" Behold advancing tow'rds Rapaume your foes,"
Loudly he cried, " Now bend your ſturdy bows,
" And let each arrow as it whizzes tell!"
Straightway on high an iron ſhow'r aroſe;
But ſtrength it's flight was wanting to impel,
Innoxiouſly it paſs'd, and in the river fell.

XXVI.

Not ſo the yeomanry, whom England's Prince
Had ſtation'd in his front, prevail'd to ſhew
Their proweſs and their ancient ſkill t' evince.
Their cloth-yard arrows to the head they drew,
Which with unerring deſtination flew,
And ſpread confuſion thro' the adverſe band.
Nor ſtaid they long their volley to renew:
VIEUPONT in vain enforc'd his ſtern command,
His archers fled, their foes unable to withſtand.

XXVII.

Indignant to behold their foul miſchance,
And anxious their miſconduct to retrieve,
SABRAN his forces order'd to advance.
" Let us from perils VIEUPONT's band relieve,"
He cried, " let thoſe who triumph now perceive
" How Gallia's ſons their duty can diſcharge:
" On, my brave comrades! ſoon ſhall ye atchieve
" The glorious toil; ceaſe not your vig'rous charge,
" Till your acknowledg'd worth by victʼry you enlarge."

XXVIII.

They heard his pow'rful mandate, and, intent
Their friends to ſuccour, his beheſt obey'd:
Tow'rds the Rapaume their eager march they bent,
And, as on high their bucklers they diſplay'd,
Mock'd the wing'd arrows which againſt them play'd.
Heedleſs of fate, and prodigal of blood,
Tho' England's choiceſt youth, in ſteel array'd,
Crouding the adverſe bank embattled ſtood,
They plung'd amid the waves, and boldly croſs'd the flood.

XXIX.

Them follow'd cloſe the band of ST. HILAIRE;
Nor was the troop of MONTREAL more ſlow
The dangers of the dread aſſault to ſhare.
Urging his ſquadron's ardour, bold VITEVAUX
Bad them again their wonted valour ſhew.
Nor leſs DE MARBY felt his manly breaſt
With conſcious worth and gen'rous feelings glow:
To dare the riſk his gallant hoſt he preſs'd,
And brandiſh'd high his ſpear, and wav'd his plumed creſt.

XXX.

Soon they perceiv'd along the river's edge
The Engliſh archers, long to warfare train'd,
Who, forming an impenetrable hedge,
A never-ceaſing ſhow'r of arrows rain'd,
And ſmote them as the mid-ſtream they attain'd.
Pierc'd by their ſhafts full many a warrior ſank,
And with his blood the limpid waters ſtain'd;
Yet ſtill they preſs'd, regardleſs of their rank,
And following brave SABRAN ruſh'd tow'rds the weſtern [bank.

XXXI.

Nor danger's front, nor death itſelf they fear'd;
They ruſh'd like wolves by thirſt of prey impell'd:
As fell the foremoſt, others ſtraight appear'd,
And ſtill intrepidly their purpoſe held,
Tho' many a bleeding corſe the current ſwell'd,
As England's archers bent their ſounding bows.
Loud was their cry as they SABRAN beheld
Surmount the bank. Imperiouſly he roſe,
Breathing defiance loud and vengeance on his foes.

XXXII.

Not from th' Ætnean caves the ſulph'rous blaſt
With force more horrible is ſeen to burſt.
Whoe'er oppos'd his fury he o'ercaſt,
Full many a ſturdy warrior he revers'd,
Broke thro' their ranks, their armaments diſpers'd,
And far around him wild confuſion ſpread.
All ſeem'd awhile in wonder loſt: none durſt
Oppoſe his progreſs, as, with carnage red,
He rang'd acroſs the field, and rode o'er heaps of dead.

XXXIII.

Him TANCARVILLE, inur'd to war perceiv'd.
As the ſtrange havock which he wrought around
He mark'd, his breaſt with indignation heav'd:
" Can there," exclaim'd he, " be no champion found,
" To face yon warrior thus with conqueſt crown'd?
" Be mine the taſk his boldneſs to defeat!"
With that his buckler on his arm he bound,
Pois'd his good weapon, ſpurr'd his courſer fleet,
And haſtily advanc'd his puiſſant foe to meet.

XXXIV.

The Gallic leader ſaw him as he came,
Nor 'gainſt him long delay'd his ſteed to guide.
Both lances ſhiver'd, as, with furious aim,
They ſought their deadly conteſt to decide.
Graſping their ſwords, each other they defied;
Cruſh'd were their helms, their poliſh'd mails were rent,
Their rich ſurcoats with guſhing blood were dy'd;
Yet, on the iſſue equally intent,
Careleſs of pain they ſeem'd, and on deſtruction bent.

XXXV.

At length the fortune of SABRAN prevail'd.
Pierc'd where his helmet with his mail combin'd,
His bold opponent fell: his eye-ſight fail'd;
With a brief pray'r, his ſpirit unconfin'd
The honour'd ſhades of his fore-fathers join'd.
For warlike fame illuſtrious as for birth,
Gen'rous as brave, magnanimous as kind,
His grateful countrymen confeſs'd his worth.
In their defence he ſank, and preſs'd th' enſanguin'd earth.

XXXVI.

SABRAN meantime his vengeful courſe renew'd;
But ſoon an object his attention caught,
Which urg'd him o'er the field. In conteſt rude
With ST. HILAIRE renown'd FITZ-GERALD fought,
Cloſe by the ſtream: with equal valour fraught
And equal ſkill, the combat they maintain'd;
Now hand to hand, and horſe to horſe, they ſought
Their blows to deal; doubtful the ſtrife remain'd,
And either helm alike with crimſon'd ſtreams was ſtain'd.

XXXVII.

Intrepid ST. HILAIRE his faulchion whirl'd,
When, yielding ſuddenly the treach'rous bank,
He and his ſteed into the ſtream were hurl'd:
Together in it's foaming waves they ſank,
And deeply of the turbid current drank.
Soon as his friend's miſhap SABRAN eſpied,
Fiercely he broke the intervening rank,
And, as FITZ-GERALD ſternly he defied,
On his bruis'd caſque a ſtroke with vengeful aim applied.

XXXVIII.

Dauntleſs the rude aggreſſion he receiv'd;
And now between them rag'd the ſtubborn fight,
And either Chieftain deeds of worth atchiev'd,
When 'croſs the river BRANCAS led his might:
His too ſucceſsful efforts ſeem'd t' invite
His friend DUMONT to follow with his band.
Their charge compell'd the Engliſh van to flight:
Full many a warrior felt their ruthleſs hand,
And many a Chieftain preſs'd the long-conteſted ſtrand.

XXXIX.

The field ſurveying with attentive glance,
BLONDEL their progreſs mark'd: his gen'rous breaſt
Heav'd, when he ſaw the lilies pale of France
Superbly waving, as their murd'rous queſt
The foe purſued: "And ſhall we not arreſt
"Their courſe audacious?" loudly he exclaim'd;
"If yet, by Engliſh virtue unrepreſs'd,
"By patriot feelings are your hearts inflam'd,
"On to the charge, nor let your oft-tried worth be ſham'd."

XL.

He ſaid. Tremendous as the God of War,
His fatal courſe the youthful Chieftain held:
Like thunder's voice his ſhout re-echo'd far;
His ſword the wide-encrimſon'd torrent ſwell'd.
In vain againſt him ſtout BRETEUIL impell'd
His vig'rous ſteed: ſtagg'ring he preſs'd the ground.
Him ne'er again his anxious wife beheld;
Encircled with her ſmiling babes around,
Ne'er in her fond embrace her lord again ſhe bound.

XLI.

Him falling BEAUPLAN ſaw, who erſt the fleet
Of royal PHILIP had tow'rds Acre led.
Impetuouſly he rode BLONDEL to meet.
Short was their conflict: on his ill-arm'd head
The youthful hero ſtruck with impulſe dread:
The fortunes of his luckleſs friend he ſhar'd,
And his freed ſpirit to attend him fled.
Far better had he ſtill the ocean dar'd,
And buffetted the waves which oft his bark had ſpar'd.

XLII.

Him to avenge impetuouſly VITEVAUX
The victor Chief aſſaulted. On his creſt
Roughly he ſmote: tho' pow'rful was his blow,
The temper'd ſteel prevail'd it's force t' arreſt.
His own the proweſs of his foe confeſs'd:
The trenchant weapon, cleaving thro' his brain,
Stopt not 'till deeply it transfix'd his breaſt.
He dropt his ſword, and fell convuls'd with pain,
While, to acquire new fame, BLONDEL rang'd o'er the plain.

XLIII.

Death ſeem'd to follow him where'er he turn'd:
Nor worth, nor numbers, his aſſault withſtood;
His vig'rous ſteed the dead and wounded ſpurn'd;
With woolly fetlocks deeply dy'd in blood
Tow'rds the Rapaume his progreſs he purſued,
Where brave FITZ-GERALD and the ſtern SABRAN
Engag'd he ſaw in combat long and rude:
Encrimſon'd ſtreams from either warrior ran,
Each was with toil o'erſpent, and each to faint began.

XLIV.

He ruſh'd impatient to his friend's relief,
Who ſcarcely now his weighty arms could wield,
And furiouſly againſt the Gallic Chief
Turning, he bore him headlong to the field.
" Preſerve his life," he cried, " but take his ſhield,
" And him forthwith to England's King convey:
" Give him refreſhment, let his wounds be heal'd.
" A foe, who thus his valour can diſplay,
" Our triumph will adorn, and grace this glorious day!"

XLV.

While thus with ſignal valour on the right
BLONDEL his fame and country's cauſe maintain'd,
Leſs fav'ring on the left appear'd the fight.
There wild confuſion and diſorder reign'd;
DE MARBY there, with vengeance unreſtrain'd,
Thro' broken ranks his deadly courſe impell'd:
There bold BRANCAS, his ſword with carnage ſtain'd,
With Engliſh gore Rapaume's red current ſwell'd:
There their diſaſtrous rule diſmay and terror held.

XLVI.

Ill brook'd DE PREAUX the ſuff'rings of his hoſt.
" Comrades!" he cried, " redeem this foul diſgrace!
" Shall your renown, ſo well acquir'd be loſt?
" To Gallia's Lilies ſhall the Croſs give place,
" And England's banners PHILIP's triumphs grace?
" If yet your ſouls bright honour's impulſe move,
" Conqueſt atchieve, or glorious death embrace!"
With that his courſer 'gainſt BRANCAS he drove,
And loudly dar'd the Chief the brunt of war to prove.

XLVII.

He heard the proud defiance, nor deferr'd
In equal arms his ſummoner to greet:
His foaming courſer's heaving flank he ſpurr'd,
And haſtily advanc'd his foe to meet.
Hardly could either Chieftain keep his ſeat,
As on his buckler rung the adverſe lance:
The potent blows compell'd them to retreat,
Yet only with new ardour to advance,
As if delay but ſerv'd their fury to enhance.

XLVIII.

With ſurer deſtination now they ſmote.
On BRANCAS' neck, where his plum'd helmet's bound
Join'd with the border of his mailed coat,
DE PREAUX's tough ſpear infix'd a ghaſtly wound,
While, in his own ill-guarded ſide, profound,
Draining his life-blood, BRANCAS' lance remain'd.
Together fell the warriors to the ground,
Their mingled gore the thirſty ſoil diſtain'd,
Each felt approaching death, yet each his ſenſe retain'd.

XLIX.

Of thoſe, who chanc'd their combat to perceive,
A croud approach'd: each, mov'd by pity, vied
DE PREAUX, their lov'd companion, to relieve.
He, as to raiſe him from the earth they tried,
With broken voice and dying accents cried,
" Ah! ceaſe, my friends! your unavailing care;
" Tow'rds me in vain your ſuccour is applied;
" Nought now can aid me but your pious pray'r,
" That Heav'n's eternal joys my flitting ſoul may ſhare.

L.

" But, if ſome ſpark of animating fire
" Within my brave opponent's breaſt remain,
" Ah! let kind pity's touch your hearts inſpire:
" Bear him in ſafety from this bloody plain,
" Let ſome kind leech's hand aſſuage his pain.
" Adieu—the veil of death is round me ſpread—
" Shew him the mercy you would hope to gain!—"
Thus gaſping ſpake the Chief: he bow'd his head,
And, courteous to the laſt, his gallant ſpirit fled.

LI.

His mild beheſt the ſorrowing warriors prais'd,
And not unwillingly his words obey'd.
The Gallic Chieftain, fainting yet, they rais'd:
He breath'd, but faſt life's vigour ſeem'd to fade.
Him on a ſhield with tender care they laid,
And, with the lifeleſs body of their friend,
With haſty footſteps to the camp convey'd.
Meantime, around new ſhouts were heard t' aſcend,
Aſtounding clamours roſe, and ſeem'd Heav'n's arch to rend.

LII.

For bold DE MARBY urg'd the dread debate.
As o'er the field with brandiſh'd ſpear he rode,
He ſeem'd the harbinger of ruthleſs fate:
Torrents of Engliſh blood around him flow'd;
His arm reſiſtleſs to the dark abode
Of diſembodied ſouls their ranks conſign'd,
And with their lifeleſs limbs the champaign ſtrew'd.
He rag'd amid them, like the midnight wind,
Which, as it paſſes, leaves a ruin'd track behind.

LIII.

Illuſtrious CHAMVILLE and FIERTE brave,
O'erthrown by him, the debt of nature paid.
Nor could his poliſh'd numbers BEAUMONT ſave:
He erſt, repoſing in his native ſhade,
Had fram'd the verſe, and ſought the Muſe's aid
To conſecrate his gentle lady's bloom.
Ah! had he ne'er the voice of war obey'd,
She had not prematurely moan'd his doom,
Nor had ſhe weeping rear'd his unavailing tomb.

LIV.

Young CHANDOS, offspring of a worthy ſire,
Now firſt in arms the Gallic ſhore had ſought.
Early he learn'd to warlike fame t' aſpire,
And, by his father's bright example taught,
The gen'rous flame of patriotiſm had caught.
By feelings high incited and by grief,
He view'd the carnage which DE MARBY wrought,
And ſtraightway to his ſuff'ring friend's relief
He ruſh'd acroſs the plain, and brav'd the vet'ran Chief.

LV.

" Whoe'er thou art," he cried, " whoſe pow'rful hand
" Thus ſpreads deſtruction thro' the bleeding throng,
" Behold a youthful Knight who bids thee ſtand!
" Bold in her cauſe, in conſcious duty ſtrong,
" Be mine to vindicate my country's wrong!"
" To feaſt and revel in thy father's hall
" Better," replied he, " to thy years belong:
" 'Twere wiſer there to lead the feſtive ball
" With ſportive damſels, than unpitied here to fall."

LVI.

" Should Heav'n my hopes fulfil," the youth rejoin'd,
" From thoſe fair damſels, when again we meet,
" I truſt a welcome doubly ſweet to find:
" With tranſport they my wiſh'd return will greet,
" When thy rich ſpoils I lay before their feet."
With that, he boldly rode againſt his foe.
The ſhock made either ſtagger in his ſeat:
Their lances ſhiver'd with the furious blow,
And 'crimſon'd ſtreams were ſeen from either mail to flow.

LVII.

Quickly their foaming courſers' ſpeed they check'd,
And, turning back, their ſwords impatient drew:
Both ſeem'd their utmoſt vigour to collect,
Intent alike the conteſt to purſue.
Sparks of bright fire from either helmet flew,
Bruiſed were their corſelets, their broad bucklers rung;
Their ſtern aſſault no intermiſſion knew:
As each againſt the other fiercely ſprung,
The dread event of war in doubtful balance hung.

LVIII.

De Marby's blade his bold opponent's creſt
Now ſhatter'd: ſwiftly wielding it again,
With an empurpled tide his 'broider'd veſt
And ſcarf wide-flowing it prevail'd to ſtain.
But on his foaming charger's arching mane
Chandos infix'd a deep and ghaſtly wound,
The ſpinal bone diſſev'ring: mad with pain,
He rear'd, he plung'd awhile, then, wheeling round,
He ſank, and falling bore his rider to the ground.

LIX.

Beneath his weight De Marby lay oppreſs'd,
When Chandos nimbly leapt upon the field,
And, his foot firmly placing on his breaſt,
With exultation cried, "Proud Chieftain, yield!
"Confeſs that youth can manhood's weapons wield!
"Now, by thoſe damſels, whom thy boaſtful taunt
"My play-mates made, thy ſentence ſhall be ſeal'd:
"To them thy proweſs thou may'ſt ſafely vaunt,
"But never more attempt a manly heart to daunt."

LX.

Thus ſaying, to his 'Squire the Chief he gave,
With orders to conduct him to his poſt,
And o'er the plain with freſhen'd ardour drave.
Doubtful was now the fortune of the hoſt;
Aſſail'd in every quarter, ground they loſt,
And, tho' BLONDEL ſtill urg'd them on, gave way:
For now new bands of foes the ſtream had croſs'd,
DES BRENNES his ſquadron led in ſtern array,
And MOUNTFORT bad his troop their wonted zeal diſplay.

LXI.

While fortune thus was balanc'd, from the height,
Where circled by his gallant Peers he ſtood,
The Engliſh King ſurvey'd th' uncertain fight.
He ſaw new reinforcements paſs the flood,
Who mark'd their deſolating way with blood:
He view'd his warriors ranging o'er the plain,
Fearleſs, and courting the encounter rude,
Intent the hoſtile impulſe to reſtrain,
To cheer their broken troops, and freſh renown to gain.

LXII.

But ſoon another ſcene his thoughts engag'd.
Beyond the river now the Fiend of War,
Her vengeful miniſters impelling, rag'd.
Her voice, of woe prophetic, ſounded far;
As o'er the field ſhe drove her ſanguin'd car,
Her hell-born courſers urg'd their progreſs drear;
Portentous like hot Sirius' flaming ſtar,
She brandiſh'd high in air her murd'rous ſpear,
And high her creſt begirt with ſnakes rejoic'd to rear.

LXIII.

There valiant MORTIMER his bands led on,
And with DES BARRES his deadly conflict held:
There, as their armour with the ſunbeams ſhone,
On either ſide the gallant Chiefs impell'd
Their foaming chargers, and with zeal unquell'd
The work of fate intrepidly purſued:
Now England's youth in deeds of worth excell'd,
Now Gallia's champions their attack renew'd,
And all confuſion ſeem'd, and anarchy and blood.

LXIV.

Now Deſtiny, preſiding at her loom,
Prepar'd her baleful web of horrors dread.
Hov'ring between each hoſt, her dubious plume,
Red with promiſcuous carnage, Victory ſpread:
Wide flew her gory treſſes, as ſhe ſhed
Her glance infuriate o'er the crouded plain,
Strew'd far around with wounded and with dead:
Woe, Havock and Deſpair compos'd her train,
Exulting to confirm her deſolating reign.

LXV.

"On to the proof!" the Monarch loudly cried,
"The battle's iſſue on ourſelves depends,
"And worth ſuperior muſt our fate decide.
"Comrades! reflect that Heav'n the brave befriends:
"Tho' threat'ning ruin on his courſe attends,
"There is a Providence, whoſe watchful care
"Him who aſſerts his country's cauſe defends.
"Arm'd with this faith, to meet the foe prepare,
"Follow where RICHARD leads, and England's glory ſhare!"

LXVI.

He ſaid. Nor more the gen'rous Chiefs requir'd:
Their hearts, which ill the foe's ſucceſs could bear,
With double zeal their Monarch's voice inſpir'd.
Him REGINALD and LACY follow'd near;
NEVILLE, MAULEON, and full many a Peer,
Aſpir'd with him their oft-tried arms to wield.
He at their head, high-brandiſhing his ſpear,
And firmly graſping his emblazon'd ſhield,
His vig'rous courſer ſpurr'd, and ruſh'd acroſs the field.

LXVII.

As 'mid the Glacieres, where their frigid throne
Eternal froſts and wintry horrors keep,
From Furca's icy bulk the boiſt'rous Rhone
Forth burſting roars among the mountains ſteep;
O'er rocky fragments with reſiſtleſs ſweep
Foaming he tears, all obſtacles o'erthrows,
And rolls his ample volume to the deep:
So ruſh'd the King on his preſumptuous foes,
So fell before him all who dar'd his wrath oppoſe.

LXVIII.

Soon the dread ſpot they reach'd, where bold BLONDEL,
And youthful CHANDOS, with his firſt eſſay
Elated, ſtrove th' invader to repel.
In vain they fought their proweſs to diſplay;
By force ſuperior driv'n their bands gave way,
While many a Chief, who ſcorn'd ignoble flight,
Stretch'd on the plain in death's embraces lay:
DES BRENNES with ardour new urg'd on the fight,
And by ſucceſs prevail'd new ſuccours to invite.

LXIX.

Him, as acroſs th' enſanguin'd field he rode
Spreading around diſmay, the King eſpied.
As with indignant rage his boſom glow'd,
He haſt'ned tow'rds him, and aloud defied
Th' inſulting Chief the conteſt to decide.
With expectation high his boſom heav'd,
As to his challenge boldly he replied:
For, fluſh'd with recent conqueſt, he conceiv'd
He now ſhould crown the feats his valour had atchiev'd.

LXX.

But viſionary prov'd his daring hope,
Nor could the arm, which had ſo oft prevail'd
To win renown, with England's Monarch cope.
Him with reſiſtleſs fury he aſſail'd;
Thro' his broad buckler and his cuiraſs mail'd
RICHARD's good lance a ready paſſage found:
The ſhades of death his cloſing eyelids veil'd,
Life's purple ſtream faſt iſſued from his wound,
Convuls'd the Chieftain ſank, and fainting preſs'd the [ground.

LXXI.

Confus'd the foe their leader's fall beheld,
And, as amid their late triumphant band
The warlike King his courſer fleet impell'd,
They ſhrank aſtounded from his vengeful hand.
None could the terrors of his wrath withſtand:
Where'er he turn'd his deſolating might,
Were ſeen the boaſtful legions to diſband,
Abandoning the now ſucceſsleſs fight,
And ruſhing tow'rds the ſtream in deſultory flight.

LXXII.

Surrounded by his comrades brave he ſought
Their yielding ſquadrons: thro' their full concourſe
Ranging, new deeds of hardihood he wrought.
Not more tremendous, from it's unknown ſource
A Comet, urging it's excentric courſe,
Thro' the dark void of trackleſs ſpace is whirl'd,
While ſuff'ring nature bows beneath it's force,
When in it's vortex many a diſtant world
Involv'd in flames is caught and from it's ſyſtem hurl'd.

LXXIII.

While thus his glorious progreſs he purſued,
PHILIP, as round he caſt his anxious eye,
In ev'ry quarter threat'ning ruin view'd.
Appall'd he liſten'd to the victors' cry,
As they their conq'ring banners wav'd on high,
And o'er the wide field urg'd their bloody queſt.
On either hand he ſaw his legions fly;
Bold MORTIMER their line diſorder'd preſs'd,
While vainly they eſſay'd his vengeance to arreſt.

LXXIV.

For now no longer 'gainſt their ſtrenuous foes
Renown'd DES BARRES his oft-tried warriors led,
No more his awe-inſpiring voice aroſe.
Him MORTIMER had number'd with the dead:
Low on the plain with Gallic ſlaughter red
Transfix'd the Champion lay; his gallant ſoul
Releas'd, to Heav'n's eternal joys was fled.
No more his legions felt his ſtrong controul;
Throughout their broken ranks diſmay and terror ſtole.

LXXV.

Thus dreadful was th' alternative of ill
Which Gallia's haughty Potentate diſmay'd.
As if his ſtern commiſſion to fulfil,
England's exulting Genius far diſplay'd
His ſounding plumes, and, in Heav'n's wrath array'd,
With voice, which harrow'd up his perjur'd breaſt,
Denounc'd revenge for confidence betray'd.
Appall'd he ſtood, by doubts and fears oppreſs'd:
At length arous'd he thus th' attentive Peers addreſs'd.

LXXVI.

" See where harſh fortune on our proſpects lours,
" Oh mark! where, pleas'd her bitt'reſt woes to drain,
" Her flood of vengeance ſhe unpitying pours!
" On ev'ry ſide ſhame and diſorder reign!
" Tho' weak our ſtruggle, and our efforts vain,
" Yet may not fortitude defeat repair?
" All is not loſt, if Gallic zeal remain!
" Let us aſſume new courage from deſpair,
" And, as becomes us, death or glorious victory ſhare."

LXXVII.

Thus ſpake the troubled King: nor on his hoſt,
In whoſe free ſouls the gen'rous ardour flam'd
Which grac'd their lineage, were his dictates loſt.
" To death or victory!" bold SARGINES exclaim'd;
" Sprung from the Paladins in hiſtory fam'd
" For worth and loyalty, their matchleſs deeds
" Ne'er by their brave deſcendants ſhall be ſham'd.
" United follow where our Monarch leads;
" He wins immortal fame who for his Sov'reign bleeds!"

LXXVIII.

As when, forth-burſting o'er the eaſtern hills,
Day's ſplendid orb the diſtant plains illumes,
From ev'ry plant ambroſial dew diſtils,
The ſpangled meadows breathe renew'd perfumes,
And, as ſucceſſive tints the vale aſſumes,
The tuneful choir, with vigour freſh inſpir'd,
Carol their ſtrains and ſpread their waving plumes:
So, by new hope and emulation fir'd,
To grace their Monarch's cauſe the Gallic Peers aſpir'd.

LXXIX.

The time's hard preſſure no debate allow'd;
For now, on either hand, their yielding force
Beneath the faulchions of their conquerors bow'd.
Led by the ſhouts of war and outcries hoarſe
Which mark'd brave MORTIMER's o'erwhelming courſe,
To meet his fury D'AVALON advanc'd.
Acroſs the field o'erſpread with many a corſe,
Once known and valued, as his eye he glanc'd,
The rage which fill'd his heart remembrance ſad enhanc'd.

LXXX.

Him follow'd MONTMORENCY, potent Chief,
With MONTOLIEU, GUERIN and D'EUREMODE,
All earneſt to inſure their friends' relief.
'Mid ſcenes of carnage gallantly they rode,
And, while around them 'crimſon'd torrents flow'd,
As if t' avenge their comrades loſt, the plain
With wounded and with dead their lances ſtrew'd.
Yet fruitleſs prov'd their zeal, their ardour vain,
Still MORTIMER prevail'd his 'vantage to maintain.

LXXXI.

While thus with new exertions rag'd the fight,
PHILIP his vizor clos'd, his ſhield embrac'd,
And follow'd by full many a gallant Knight,
The pride and laſt reſource of France, in haſte
Tow'rds the Rapaume his anxious progreſs trac'd,
Where England's Monarch, maſter of the field,
His routed foes in wild diſorder chas'd,
Who, to ſuperior force compell'd to yield,
Shrinking before his wrath to Heav'n for aid appeal'd.

LXXXII.

But to their perjur'd cauſe was aid denied:
Them to the river's marge, abrupt and ſteep,
England's bold warriors drove. In vain they tried
T' eſcape the terrors of th' enſanguin'd deep.
As forc'd by dogs, a flock of tim'rous ſheep
Gaze on ſome precipice with doubtful glance,
As if afraid t' attempt the dang'rous leap,
Soon from the threat'ning crag themſelves they lance,
Impell'd by preſent riſk to truſt to vent'rous chance.

LXXXIII.

So Gallia's legions from the perilous bank,
Crouded with dead and wounded, ſought the flood.
There numbers indiſcriminately ſank,
And ſtain'd the foaming waters with their blood;
While others, buffetting the current rude,
Prevail'd to ſtem the now augmented tide,
And, turning on their foes who ſtill purſued,
By deſperation urg'd their wrath defied,
And the dread work of death with vengeful ardour plied.

LXXXIV.

Succeſsleſs prov'd their hazardous eſſay:
BLONDEL ſtill hung on their defenceleſs rear,
And forc'd their weaken'd ſquadrons to give way.
Around him, as he brandiſh'd high his ſpear,
Diſmay and terror ſeem'd their courſe to ſteer:
Where'er he turn'd his deſolating arm,
Reſiſtance fruitleſs prov'd: o'ercome by fear,
Thoſe, who ſo lately ſpread around alarm,
Now ſought by inſtant flight to 'ſcape impending harm.

LXXXV.

He ceas'd not their tumultuous ſpeed to urge,
The trembling fugitives purſuing cloſe
Thro' the red current to it's eaſtern verge,
Where PHILIP, ſad ſpectator of their woes,
Indignant ſtood his progreſs to oppoſe.
He unappall'd the threat'ning King ſurvey'd,
And, as impatient from the bank he roſe,
Fearleſs his ſpear with ſlaughter ſtain'd diſplay'd,
As if his ſingle arm the battle's fortune ſway'd.

LXXXVI.

As when a ſwain, returning to his fold,
Meets an half-famiſh'd wolf who bears away
His cheriſh'd lamb, with deſperation bold
His murd'rous purpoſe he attempts to ſtay,
And ſnatches from his jaws his helpleſs prey:
So ruſh'd the King againſt the youthful Knight.
He, no leſs eager for the noble fray,
Turn'd tow'rds him, and, collecting all his might,
With graceful confidence addreſs'd him to the fight.

LXXXVII.

Already each had ſpurr'd his vig'rous ſteed,
And, as they onward rode, the wond'ring hoſt
Stood gazing on them with obſervant heed,
Wrapt in ſuſpenſe, in mute attention loſt,
When, as the river royal RICHARD croſs'd,
Loudly he cried, " BLONDEL! the ſtrife forbear!
" None but myſelf this enterprize ſhall boaſt:
" With none this proud occaſion will I ſhare,
" Nor ſhall another's brow my rightful laurels wear!"

LXXXVIII.

As thus he ſaid, he reach'd the bloody ſtrand.
BLONDEL his courſer check'd in middle ſpace,
Obedient to his Sov'reign's high command,
While, his renown'd antagoniſt to face,
The Gallic King his circle 'gan to trace.
RICHARD, meantime, advancing thro' the croud
With native dignity and manly grace,
On his falſe foe a look of ſcorn beſtow'd,
And thus, while beam'd his eye with tranſport, cried aloud.

LXXXIX.

" Loſt as thou art to truth, by treaſons ſtain'd,
" Since Heav'n's avenging Pow'r my ſteps to guide
" In equal field to meet thee now has deign'd,
" By him thou dar'd to wrong art thou defied.
" My juſt revenge no longer is denied.
" Now, if thou can'ſt, thy faithleſs life defend:
" This hour our deadly conteſt ſhall decide,
" This hour the triumphs of thy guilt ſhall end!
" May Heav'n, which knows my heart, my rightful cauſe
[befriend!"

XC.

" No leſs delight I feel," replied the King,
" That fortune grants us now to terminate
" The deep and ſettled enmities, which ſpring
" From antient rivalſhip and jealous hate.
" No longer waſte thoſe moments in debate,
" Which, ſince in adverſe arms oppos'd we meet,
" We ſhould to deeds of vengeance conſecrate.
" Thus to thy heart! May ſhame and foul defeat
" O'erwhelm him who ſhall firſt from the aſſault retreat!"

XCI.

He ſaid, and 'gainſt the Engliſh Monarch's breaſt
His weapon ſtoutly bent: ſhiv'ring it flew
In fragments o'er the plain. He from it's reſt
The uſeleſs ſhaft with indignation threw,
And ſwiftly forth his glitt'ring faulchion drew.
Soon as his gen'rous foe the chance perceiv'd,
He dropt his ſpear, and with obſervance due
His good Excalibor on high he heav'd,
And his opponent's blow on his broad ſhield receiv'd.

XCII.

His debt of vengeance ſoon did he repay.
On PHILIP's ample and emblazon'd ſhield
His blade deſcending bore the marge away,
And drove the founding fragment to the field.
Now both were ſeen their puiſſant arms to wield,
To ſtrike, to ruſh, to parry, to retire;
Each helm and corſelet, as their weapons peal'd,
Reſounding rung, emitting ſparks of fire,
While many a ſanguine ſtream proclaim'd their ruthleſs ire.

XCIII.

[illegible]

XCIV.

[illegible]

XCV.

Soon as the gallant King his ſtate perceiv'd,
" Now ſhall my perjur'd foe," he cried, " be ſeen
" Gracing the triumph which my arm atchiev'd!"
But, as he turn'd to ſeize him, bold SARGINES,
His vig'rous courſer ſpurring, ruſh'd between.
" Thus for my Monarch I my life devote!"
Loudly he cried, and with his faulchion keen
So ſturdily on RICHARD's cuiraſs ſmote,
That dented was the ſteel, and rent his rich ſurcoat.

XCVI.

With vengeance and diſdain his boſom burn'd.
Relinquiſhing his now defenceleſs foe,
Quickly to face th' aggreſſor fierce he turn'd.
Nor was SARGINES to meet his fury ſlow.
Dread was their rude encounter: many a blow
They gave, and many a harſh return they bore;
From either helm and mail began to flow,
As fell their potent weapons, ſtreams of gore,
And either high-plum'd creſt marks of their proweſs wore.

XCVII.

Meantime, while thus th' eventful combat rag'd,
The anxious Peers who PHILIP's eſcort made,
Perceiving RICHARD with SARGINES engag'd,
Ruſh'd in a body to their Sov'reign's aid.
Him fainting yet upon his ſteed they laid,
And, charging thoſe who to oppoſe them ſtood,
Far from the field their ſacred truſt convey'd:
Thro' the throng'd croud their deſp'rate way they hew'd,
And tow'rds Gaalor's walls their progreſs ſwift purſued.

XCVIII.

As England's King indignantly beheld
The daring efforts of the loyal band,
His boſom with unbridled fury ſwell'd;
Like light'ning fell his death-diſpenſing hand:
No more SARGINES his onſet could withſtand;
Thro' the ſteel'd cuiraſs, where his neck it claſp'd,
Deep in his ſhoulder ſank his trenchant brand:
Then, as with pain the writhing Chieftain gaſp'd,
Whirling again his ſword, him by the throat he graſp'd.

XCIX.

" Now," he exclaim'd, " thy bold intruſion rue!
" Since thou haſt learn'd thy forfeit life to ſcorn,
" Receive the vengeance to thy raſhneſs due!"
" Strike!" cried SARGINES—"True to my ligeance ſworn,
" What nobler trophy can my fame adorn?
" 'Twas mine my King from threat'ning death to ſave,
" By me was PHILIP from deſtruction torn!
" Again his banner may triumphant wave,
" His tear perhaps may grace SARGINES' illuſtrious grave!"

C.

" Thy virtues," cried the King, " thy gen'rous zeal,
" From menac'd vengeance ſhall thy life reprieve.
" While RICHARD's ſoul a foe's deſert can feel,
" Ne'er ſhall his pow'r of freedom him bereave,
" Who dar'd ſuch acts heroic to atchieve,
" Who nobly courted death his Prince to ſave.
" Whate'er thy weaken'd ſtate requires receive:
" Know that true courteſy reſpects the brave,
" And freely grants the aid which ſuff'ring worth may crave.

CI.

" And ſhould'ſt thou, Chieftain! England's Monarch deem
" Deſerving of thy friendſhip to partake,
" Accept this pledge of his unfeign'd eſteem!
" Henceforward deign to wear it for his ſake!
" Let it the memory of this day awake,
" And of thy glorious deed!" With that in haſte
He bad th' attendants from his ſhoulder take
The ſcarf which BERENGARIA's hand had trac'd,
And on the Champion's arm the precious trophy plac'd.

CII.

" Prince!" cried the Chief, " thy friendſhip I accept,
" And ſacred ſhall this pledge of thy eſteem
" By him who feels thy excellence be kept.
" The royal virtues which around thee beam,
" Our age's grace, ſome future poet's theme"—
" Forbear," exclaim'd the King, " the moments fleet
" With mine and England's deareſt int'reſts teem:
" Awhile, brave warrior! from the field retreat;
" I go, the taſk which fate impoſes to complete."

CIII.

The air with clamours of applauſe was rent,
As thus the Monarch ſpoke. The wounded Knight
Was led by BASSET to the royal tent,
And ready ſuccour found. Meantime, the fight
No more uncertain hung: In gen'ral flight
The Gallic troops were driv'n acroſs the field.
Far from the ſcene of blood their courſers light
Some ſwiftly bore, while more for grace appeal'd,
Abandoning the arms they dar'd no longer wield.

CIV.

Nor did brave MORTIMER leſs ſurely guide
To glorious victory his illuſtrious band.
He ſeem'd o'er all their movements to preſide,
And, while he ſagely iſſued his command,
Shar'd boldly in the enterprize he plann'd.
With ſuch a Chief their ardour to inflame,
Nought could the force of Engliſhmen withſtand:
Nor ſhall they, if by valour led, ere ſhame
Their country's fair renown and long recorded fame.

CV.

Confirm'd were now the fortunes of the day:
Victory on high to her loud tube gave breath,
Rejoic'd her RICHARD's triumphs to diſplay,
While, on his brow ſhe plac'd her blooming wreath.
Now 'gan the Engliſh Chiefs their faulchions ſheath,
And ev'ry heart with fond preſages beat,
That once again, their native ſhades beneath,
They ſhould their fond and lovely partners meet,
And pure affection's vows with ecſtaſy repeat.

CVI.

With loud acclaim their valiant King they hail'd,
And o'er the plain with Gallic ſlaughter ſtrew'd
Wild exultation and delight prevail'd.
RICHARD well-pleas'd their gen'rous impulſe view'd,
" Comrades," aloud he cried, " to end our feud
" But little now remains: if fortune ſmile,
" The path of glory ſtill ſhould be purſued:
" One effort more will crown our worthy toil,
" And proud pre-eminence ſhall grace our favour'd iſle."

CVII.

He ſaid. New hope each warrior's eye illum'd,
And, by their Monarch's bright example cheer'd,
Their march tow'rds proud Gaalor they reſum'd;
Throughout the hoſt exulting ſhouts were heard,
And England's conq'ring ſtandard high was rear'd.
Now near at hand the wide embattled wall,
Frowning in rude magnificence, appear'd:
Nought could it's ſtrength their ardent ſouls appal;
From perils new they ſeem'd freſh glory to foreſtal.

CVIII.

And ſoon, drawn forth in menacing array,
They 'gan the Catapultas huge to bend,
Their dread artill'ry on the tow'rs to play:
Now, thro' the yielding air compell'd t' aſcend,
Fragments of rocks the fortreſs ſeem'd to rend;
Now, as repleniſh'd, groan'd each huge machine,
A ſhow'r deſtructive they combin'd to blend,
When from the portal with ſubmiſſive mien,
Waving his flag of truce, MOUNTJOY was iſſuing ſeen.

CIX.

" Ceaſe your aſſault," exclaim'd th' expecting King,
" 'Till yonder harbinger of peace declare,
" What terms his Prince commiſſions him to bring."
MOUNTJOY meantime advanc'd with ſorrowing air;
His haſten'd ſtep betoken'd anxious care,
And ſilent was his progreſs thro' the croud.
When near approach'd, with reverences fair,
Precurſors of his humble ſuit, he bow'd,
Then his entruſted charge he thus proclaim'd aloud.

CX.

" Once more I come this preſence high to greet.
" My Sov'reign and his Peers thy puiſſance own,
" And on theſe terms by me propoſe to treat.
" Normannia ſhall confeſs thy ſway alone;
" France ſhall redeem the pris'ners thou haſt won:
" If other grievances ſhall ſtill remain,
" From ancient feuds or recent errors grown,
" Theſe they propoſe in future to explain,
" That henceforth either ſtate may amity maintain."

CXI.

" MOUNTJOY!" replied the King, " this anſwer take.
" Tell him who ſent thee, that a conquer'd foe
" Has ſmall pretence ſuch haughty terms to make.
" Yonder proud fortreſs ſhall be levell'd low,
" Ere England will her rightful claims forego.
" Let him come forth: by us ſhall be diſcuſs'd
" What I ſhall then propoſe. Let PHILIP know
" To RICHARD's honour he may ſafely truſt,
" Who ne'er, when once his faith was plighted, prov'd [unjuſt."

CXII.

He ſaid. MOUNTJOY withdrew impreſs'd with awe:
Nor in ſuſpenſe did RICHARD long await.
Surrounded by his faithful Chiefs he ſaw
The Gallic Prince deſcending from the gate.
Confus'd he ſeem'd, and, as if adverſe fate
Had bow'd his ſpirit, downcaſt was his look;
Yet ſtill his eye beam'd with diſdain and hate.
Unus'd ſubmiſſion and diſgrace to brook,
As on he came his limbs with conſcious feelings ſhook.

CXIII.

Him thus affected as the King ſurvey'd,
The ſcorn which fill'd his boſom he ſuppreſs'd,
And pity his reſentment ſtern allay'd,
As thus his vanquiſh'd rival he addreſs'd.
" If yet thy haughty and unfeeling breaſt
" A ſentiment of loyal truth retain,
" Sufficiently thy fortunes are depreſs'd.
" The recollection of the crimes, which ſtain
" Thy once unſullied fame, muſt wring thy ſoul with pain."

CXIV.

" 'Twere bootleſs thy offences to repeat,
" Nor ſhall thy perj'ries now by me be ſcann'd.
" Heav'n has o'erpaid them all by thy defeat.
" Thus, when chaſtis'd by my avenging hand,
" To ſee thee here in patient ſuppliance ſtand,
" To hear thee terms of clemency implore
" On this long harraſs'd and inſulted ſtrand,
" Amply my wounded dignity reſtore:
" They heal my wrongs, and as a Man I aſk no more.

CXV.

" But as a King, as he whom Heav'n's high will
" Has call'd o'er favour'd Albion to preſide,
" The duties of my charge I muſt fulfil.
" When firſt with thee in ſacred bonds allied
" I ſought my hoſt 'gainſt SALADIN to guide,
" Thy dereliction Judah's cauſe betray'd:
" Urg'd by ambition, jealouſy and pride,
" Againſt thy friend thy banners were diſplay'd,
" And my raſh confidence with treach'ry was repaid.

CXVI.

" When I remain'd in Paleſtine employ'd,
" My ſworn Ally his bands againſt me led.
" This unſuſpecting province they deſtroy'd:
" With Norman gore their impious ſwords were red,
" And Gallic vengeance on her entrails fed.
" Nor leſs was England doom'd thy rage to bear.
" There curs'd rebellion's toils by thee were ſpread,
" By thee was JOHN ſeduc'd thy guilt to ſhare,
" To ſtain with blood the land which nature bad him ſpare.

CXVII.

" Now hear my juſtice overtake thy crime.
" And proves tho' vengeance may a while purſue
" It's prompt pace, that none there will a time,
" When retribution, with atonement due,
" Shall make the traitor his offences rue.
" Such is thy fallen fate; and if my ſoul
" Like thine no guide but mad ambition knew,
" If mercy could not my revenge controul,
" I might to their extent repay thy perjuries foul.

CXVIII.

" But thus I call thee to redeem thy guilt.
" By pray'r and penitence Heav'n's grace implore,
" To pardon all the Chriſtian blood th' haſt ſpilt:
" Let Normandy confeſs my ſway once more;
" Her injur'd people's property reſtore:
" For all thy captive warriors ranſom yield;
" Surrender thoſe who arms againſt thee bore;
" Twelve hoſtages, who beſt their ſwords can wield,
" Deliver to my hand when our compact is ſeal'd.

CXIX.

" Such are the terms of ſafety and redreſs,
" To which, tho' victor, I myſelf confine.
" Say, in theſe proffers wilt thou acquieſce?
" To name them by the fate of war is mine,
" To deem them juſt and courteous ſhould be thine.
" Tho' further might I conqueſt's rights improve,
" I would not on ſeverity refine;
" Nor ſhall the Prince, who once poſſeſs'd my love,
" When adverſe fortune lours, unroyal treatment prove."

CXX.

As thus impreſſively the Monarch ſpoke,
The Gallic King, confus'd, eſſay'd to hide
The feelings which within his breaſt awoke.
Silent awhile he ſtood, and vainly tried
To check the riſing ſigh, then thus replied.
" Howe'er diſaſter may my mind oppreſs,
" Tho' harſh th' avowal to my wounded pride,
" I muſt thy princely courteſy confeſs,
" Which with new charms has pow'r e'en virtue's ſelf to dreſs.

CXXI.

" To err is human: leaſt of all is he,
" On whoſe ill-fated brow a crown is plac'd,
" From riſk ſecure or from temptation free;
" Truth from his preſence is by flatt'ry chas'd,
" By adulation is his ſoul debas'd,
" And ſervile paraſites beſet his throne.
" Too freely did I of their poiſons taſte:
" Tho' born for others, for myſelf alone
" I learn'd to live, and deem'd all excellence my own.

CXXII.

" Thus, amid ſcenes which warp'd my judgment bred,
" Ambition open'd her enticing views:
" I follow'd as the gay deceiver led,
" While ſhe, my yielding ſenſes to abuſe,
" With new-born hope prevail'd my mind t' amuſe.
" But, while I freely thus my faults confeſs,
" I mean not my tranſgreſſions to excuſe:
" It ſuits me more thoſe feelings to expreſs,
" Which thy acknowledg'd wrongs impel me to redreſs.

CXXIII.

" The terms, on which thou haſt propos'd to treat,
" Are ſuch as well our preſent ſtate become,
" And ſuch as my entire concurrence meet.
" Let us once more our ancient league reſume,
" Ah! may again in priſtine vigour bloom
" The friendſhip which congenial ſpirits claim:
" And may the Pow'r, who regulates our doom,
" Grant that, reſtor'd to luſtre, PHILIP's name
" 'Mid Gallia's Kings may ſtand immortaliz'd by fame."

CXXIV.

" Thus then," cried RICHARD, " let our diſcord end!
" Thus my late rival in my arms I bind,
" And hail him, as of old, my valued friend!
" Henceforward prove to virtue's laws reſign'd,
" And me of wrongs forgetful ſhalt thou find.
" Shew thyſelf worthy of thy ſacred truſt,
" And future ages, to thy errors blind,
" But to thy merits and perfections juſt,
" With eulogies ſhall grace thy venerated buſt."

CXXV.

As ſmiling Peace thus chas'd the Fiend of War,
The gallant warriors nature's voice obey'd,
And ſhouts of glad acclaim reſounded far.
Soon did they Rouen's battlements pervade.
No terrors now fond BERENGARIA ſtay'd:
Her victor RICHARD once again to greet,
With vet'ran LEICESTER and the Cyprian Maid
Acroſs the plain ſhe urg'd her progreſs fleet,
While with unbounded joy her heart exulting beat.

CXXVI.

As ſhe approach'd, the echoing trumpet's ſound
Announc'd 'twixt France and England firm accord.
" Oh RICHARD!" ſhe exclaim'd, "by conqueſt crown'd,
" Art thou once more to my fond arms reſtor'd!
" What greater bliſs can providence afford,
" Than thus again to preſs thee to my heart?
" Thanks to high Heav'n, which I ſo oft implor'd,
" When torn my breaſt with agonizing ſmart,
" That now indeed we meet never again to part.

CXXVII.

" My life! my love!" th' enraptur'd King replied,
" Partake my triumphs and my tranſport ſhare!
" No more ſhall fate our conſtant ſouls divide!
" No more ſhall war's dread clamours rend the air,
" Or mad ambition ſcatter wide deſpair.
" Now my long harraſs'd realm, redeem'd from woe,
" Again ſhall feel it's King's paternal care:
" Again my ſubjects happineſs ſhall know,
" And ev'ry face ſhall ſmile, and ev'ry boſom glow.

CXXVIII.

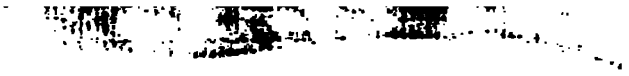
" And ye, brave guardians of our native iſle!
" Who oft in peril's front have glory fought,
" Reap the full harveſt of your gen'rous toil!
" Renown is your's, by knightly proweſs wrought:
" By your example ſhall our ſons be taught
" That virtue will felicity inſure.
" Like their bold ſires with patriot ardour fraught,
" May they preſerve their faith and honour pure!
" Then to remoteſt time ſhall England's fame endure!

CXXIX.

" And thou, BLONDEL! my lov'd, my valued friend!
" Let CHARICLÆA's hand thy worth repay:
" May bleſſings on your nuptial torch attend,
" And chaſte delights which never can decay.
" Now with devotion conſecrate this day,
" Then to old England be our courſe addreſs'd.
" There, while our conq'ring banners we diſplay,
" Beneath our well-earn'd laurels let us reſt,
" Grac'd by the world's applauſe, by Heav'n's protection [bleſs'd."

CXXX.

Thus ſpoke the gallant King, and o'er the plain,
With mien majeſtic and commanding grace,
To Rouen's ramparts led his martial train.
Sublime he ſeem'd, as, when freſh breezes chaſe
The envious clouds which hid his glorious face,
The Sun, in full meridian luſtre bright,
Is ſeen thro' Heav'n's wide field his courſe to trace,
When nature's pow'rs his genial beams incite,
And all creation glows with rapture and delight.

THE END.

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